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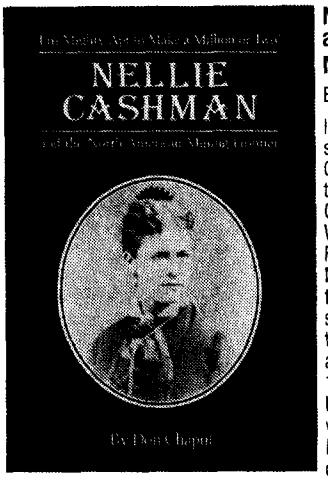


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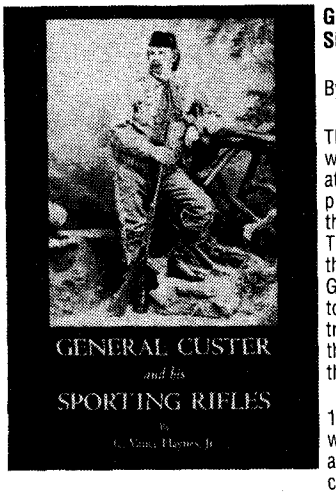
If a Hall of Fame is ever built to the mining stampeders of the American West, Nellie Cashman would get top billing. Forced to leave the Ireland they loved during the Famine, the Cashmans quickly took to the ways of the New World. After some years in Boston and San Francisco, Nellie chose the mining camps of Nevada and British Columbia for her first restaurant, hotels, and mining ventures. She then spent more than a decade in the mining centers of Tombstone, Bisbee, Nogales, Kingston, and other Southwest boom towns. By the late 1890s, Nellie Cashman had been in boom and bust in a dozen frontier communities. Yet, this was just the beginning of her quest for riches. In 1898 she was off to the Klondike, where she operated restaurants and placer mined. She then headed into the Koyukuk River basin of Alaska, north of the Arctic Circle, where she mined until her death in 1925.

Most accounts of Nellie have emphasized her compassion and dedication towards helping her fellow man. Yet, her acts of mercy and attitudes of consideration have tended to disguise what she really was, a tough, aggressive prospector and miner, willing to compete with anyone, in any place, for the golden and silver harvest. Drawing upon court cases, tax records, newspaper accounts, and mining literature, author Chaput interprets the volatile, ever-changing life of this frontier stampeder. His use of the voluminous Cashman Papers held by the Sisters of St. Ann in Victoria, British Columbia, stalwart friends of Nellie for fifty years, make this book the most detailed and accurate study yet written on the life of this remarkable woman. This beautifully composed book is designed in 5½" x 8½" hard cover format. 200 pp., 38 photos and maps, notes, bibliography, and index. Dust jacket in color. Edition limited to 1500 copies. **Price: $26.95**




**GENERAL CUSTER AND HIS SPORTING RIFLES**

By C. Vance Haynes, Jr.

The end of the Civil War brought on a new wave of westward expansion and government attention turned once again to the "Indian problem" as railroads were extended across the plains and toward the Rocky Mountains. The newly formed 7th Regiment of Cavalry and the "boy general," Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer, were ordered west to join the Hancock Expedition of 1867. The troopers were armed with Spencer carbines, the first repeating shoulder arms adopted by the U.S. Army.

It was the prerogative of officers during the 1870s to carry non-regulation arms if they so wished. While some officers carried regulation arms, some opted to carry rifles that had been customized to increase accuracy and effectiveness according to individual preference. These were commonly referred to as sporting rifles, because, in addition to military operations, they were used for hunting to improve their fare over that provided by army rations. George Armstrong Custer had at least three sporting rifles during his Western campaigns, only one of which is known to have survived, a model 1866 Springfield rifle.

This is not only the story of the rediscovery of this particular rifle, but also of Custer's use of sporting rifles, both Springfield and Remington models, during the "Royal Buffalo Hunt," the Yellowstone Expedition of 1873, the Black Hills Expedition of 1874, and at the Little Big Horn in 1876. Besides discussing the attributes and modifications of Custer's rifles, Dr. Haynes speculates as to the ultimate fate of the General's Remington.

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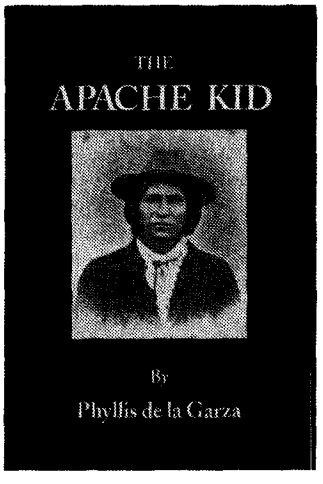


**THE APACHE KID**

By Phyllis de la Garza

Apart from Cochise and Geronimo, perhaps no other Apache gained more notoriety in Arizona history than Apache Kid. Unfortunately, few writers thought enough about him to try telling the whole story. The name "Apache Kid" fired up literary imaginations from San Francisco to New York, and, always, Kid was the villain. But unlike Cochise and Geronimo, who have been turned into some sort of heroes, Kid seems destined to remain a shadowy figure of the Old West.

Apache Kid learned white man's ways, spoke passable English, and admired both military and civilian authorities he tried so hard to emulate. Unlike Cochise and Geronimo, Kid worked as a scout, risking his life for the sake of conformity in the white man's world. And unlike Cochise and Geronimo, when he did go on the warpath he outfoxed everybody who set a trap for him. His ultimate fate to this day remains a mystery.

The culmination of six years of research through court documents, military records, archival collections, and territorial newspapers, this book brings to light the real circumstances surrounding much of Kid's career. Oddly enough, the truth about Apache Kid is far more interesting than any fictional story could ever be.

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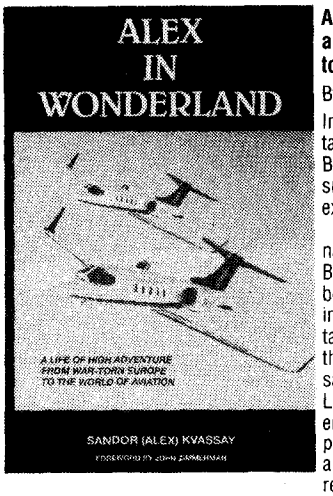


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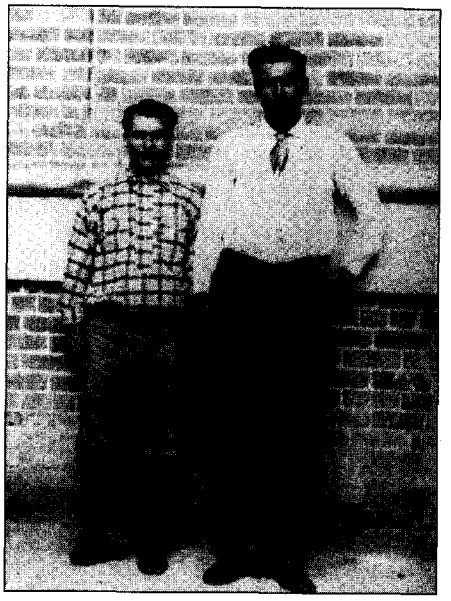

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# FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, Folks!

It looks like the depopulation of the West that people were predicting a few years back isn't going to happen after all. Well, sort of.

The theory was that as we used up the West's natural resources, and as agribusiness conglomerates overran family ranches and farms, rural populations would migrate either to the coasts and the South or to a few densely populated urban pockets such as Denver and Phoenix. What was left would be an uninhabitable, arid wasteland.

Those predictions seemed reasonable at the time. But they failed to take into account that the isolation, the aridity, and the rugged terrain that were supposed to make the West uninhabitable are the very qualities that lured people West in the first place. Some came to escape the crowds in the East. Some came for the dry air. Some came for the natural beauty.

Admittedly, many came pursuing dreams of wealth or fame that by and large proved as illusory as a mirage on the plains. But the common people came West simply to live in the West, and the livestock industry that is so vital a part of our heritage, born by accident in post-Civil War Texas, was not an end but a means.

The earliest ranchers didn't live in the West to ranch; they ranched to live in the West. Eventually the two became almost inseparable and the end and the means became less clear cut. And so it seemed that as the cattle business in the West declined, the West would decline with it, and people would retreat to presumably more attractive places to live.

It hasn't happened. In fact, the West is the fastest growing region of the United States. As the nation's economy has shifted (for better or worse) from agriculture and heavy industry to service and high technology, it has enabled more, not fewer, people to take advantage of the West's wide open spaces. Rural Westerners haven't migrated lemming-like to the urban East or to California. Instead, urban Easterners and, especially, Californians are fleeing "civilization" to lead relatively safer and saner lives amid the scenic splendor of the rural West.

The inevitable irony, of course, is that no matter where they go, crowds have the unfortunate habit of taking crowds with them. So instead of being abandoned, the rural West is being overrun, and the western small town is being replaced by "rural sprawl." The changes have led to predictable conflicts between the traditional old-timers and the upstart newcomers.

Just how much of this population growth the West's water supply can support remains to be seen, and we may yet turn the region into an abandoned and uninhabitable wasteland. In the meantime, though, the depopulation of the rural West runs apace—the urban pockets just aren't quite so big (yet) or as distant as folks predicted. The transition threatens to destroy much of what made the West desirable in the first place—the peaceful isolation, the independence, the climate, the natural beauty, and more than a century of ranching heritage.

In an article on the subject not long ago, *Newsweek* magazine asked metaphorically, "Can the cowboys coexist with the Feds, the militias—and cappuccino bars?" Surely the old and the new can accommodate one another for the sake of their shared beliefs and dreams whose roots grow deeper than mere economics. For after all, to end with a deeply meaningful quote from our sage publisher, Steve Gragert, "I always thought cowboy coffee and espresso were the same thing."

John Joerschke



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### Bonafide Skull?

As a subscriber to *True West* for many years, I have always enjoyed your stories of the West the way it was in the old days. I especially enjoyed "Apache Kid" by the fine writer Phyllis de la Garza. The following footnote to the story of that famous outlaw might interest your readers. True or not, I think the story warrants further research by a western historian to determine its authenticity. It appeared as an article on page one of the *New York Globe.*

"Chicago, May 18 [1907]—Apache Kid, the notorious Indian bandit upon whose head the federal authorities several years ago put a heavy price, has been slain and his skull now rests in the laboratory of a Chicago physician.

"The names of the men who killed him are not divulged, although they are known to several Chicagoans. The skull, however, has been obtained by William Kent and H.A. Moss of the board of trade and one or two other Chicagoans.

"Mr. Kent, who is now on his ranch near Golconda, Nevada, heard that the Kid had been killed and offered a reward for it. Soon after it was laid at his feet by a band of ranchers.

"Mr. Kent will present the mounted skull of the outlaw to Yale University and will suggest that the anthropologists look it over and report."

I hope the story will interest you.—*Lot Grafton, New York, New York.*

**Editor's Note:** Interest me, indeed! If the skull went to Yale, though, it probably ended up in the possession of Skull and Bones.

### Troublesome Trapdoor Springfield

Looks like the publishing gremlins got to Brad Prowse's article on the Trapdoor Springfield, "Rapid Fire" (*True West,* March 1995).

The weapon at the head of the article on page forty-nine is definitely a carbine, not a rifle, while the weapon on page fifty-one is definitely a rifle, not a carbine, and the weapon on page fifty-two is again definitely a carbine, not a rifle. The


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only accurate caption is the one with the photo on page fifty that shows Geronimo holding a carbine.

Actually the article is rather good, though I'm not always as critical of the weapon as Mr. Prowse is. I have handled a number of them as a reenactor ordnance sergeant at Fort Concho here in San Angelo. Also, I think he makes too strong a point about the supposed 1884 model change. The change in marking really only acknowledged a number of smaller changes made over the preceding years.

The problem with non-extraction applied mostly to the original inside-primed copper cases and the early production carbines. All rifles of the trapdoor series carried a cleaning rod, but early productions of the carbine had only one cleaning rod per case of eight carbines. After Custer's defeat at the Little Bighorn, carbines were provided with a three-piece cleaning rod carried in a compartment in the stock butt, covered with a spring-closed plate.

I would like to know where Mr. Prowse obtained the .50-70 cartridges, as I would like to add some to my collection.—*Bill Stebbins, San Angelo, Texas.*

**Editor's Note:** Thanks, Mr. Stebbins, for writing. The gremlins were ours, not Mr. Prowse's. I'm no weapons expert, but I do know the difference between a carbine and a rifle. Even so, we managed to transpose the photo captions on pages fifty-one and fifty-two. As for the photo of the breechblock, we started out with a photo of a rifle, then decided to use the better photo of the carbine, and in the meantime overlooked changing the caption. All in all, though, I had better luck with the weapon than Custer's Seventh.

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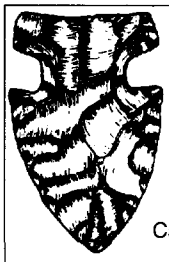
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# FREDRICKSBURG'S "COFFEE MILL" CHURCH

by David F. Crosby

What do you get when you mix a Prussian with a Texan? The answer to that riddle lies in Fredericksburg, Texas.

Established in 1846 astride the Pedernales River in the Texas Hill Country by Baron Ottfried Hans Von Meusebach and 120 German families, they named the little hamlet after Prince Frederick of Prussia. They were Germans and intended to stay Germans. They succeeded.

A hardy lot, they assimilated the agricultural techniques needed to survive on the Texas frontier, but kept their own language and customs. Their legacy evolved into a picturesque town surrounded by the beauty of the Texas Hill Country where you can order a German meal, attend a Schuetzenfest (shooting festival) or listen to a Saengerfest (singing festival) and still hear German spoken.

Life wasn't always so pleasant. Four thousand German settlers arrived at the Texas port of Indianola in February 1846 only to find that Meusebach and the Adelsverein (the German society overseeing the immigration) did not have enough money to transport them to Fredericksburg. Stranded on the coast, they sickened and began to die. Sickness soon flamed into an epidemic. The survivors carried their diseases with them to Fredericksburg. Eight hundred new immigrants died in Fredericksburg. So many that the townspeople had to resort to sewing the bodies in sacks and burying them without a funeral. By January 1847 only five hundred healthy residents remained, and they faced a shortage of food and hills frequented by Comanche war parties. Acorns ground into powder served for coffee and even dough for bread. In March, Meusebach rode up into the hills to treat with the Indians.

Promising the Comanches something to eat should their buffalo hunts fail and $1,000 in goods, he purchased friendship between the German people and the Comanches in the land between the Llano and San Saba rivers. While Meusebach and the Comanches talked at council other Comanche campfires dotted the hills surrounding the small hamlet. The fires terrified the town's children, and to allay their fears, the German mothers told them that Easter bunnies were cooking eggs and tended the numerous fires. When Meusebach returned from his successful mission and learned of the story, he proclaimed that the town would hold an Easter pageant rekindling the fires in the hills every year that the treaty went unbroken. The historic Easter pageant is still held.

David F. Crosby

The reconstructed "coffee mill church" was the first building in the city, serving as a house of worship, school, and meeting hall. It now holds archives and a local history collection.

The Adelsverein had the responsibility of providing a church for the immigrants. In 1847 they constructed the *Vereins Kirche* or community church. The first building in town, it also served as a meeting hall, school, and fort. In time other buildings gradually took over the duties of the *Vereins Kirche*, and it fell into disuse and disrepair. Near the turn of the century it was torn down. The 1936 Texas Centennial sparked Fredericksburg to reconstruct the *Vereins Kirche*. Using hand-hewn lumber and native limestone it was rebuilt with the cornerstone and bell from the original church.

Today the *Vereins Kirche* holds archives and a local history collection chronicling the German settlers' ordeal. It is open to visitors Monday thru Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Admission is one dollar for adults and fifty cents for students. Children under age twelve are admitted free. For more information about the *Vereins Kirche* call (210) 997-7832.



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# "GATEWAY TO THE COLORADO PLATEAU"

Nestled among the pine trees at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, the Museum of North Arizona is an ideal place to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the region surrounding Flagstaff, Arizona, and the Grand Canyon.

Founded in 1928, the museum is dedicated to the understanding and interpretation of the Colorado Plateau, a geographic province encompassing northern Arizona and the Four Corners region, including the Grand Canyon, Bryce and Zion national parks, and the Hopi and Navajo reservations. Research exhibits and educational programs are conducted on the biology, geology, anthropology, and fine arts of the area.

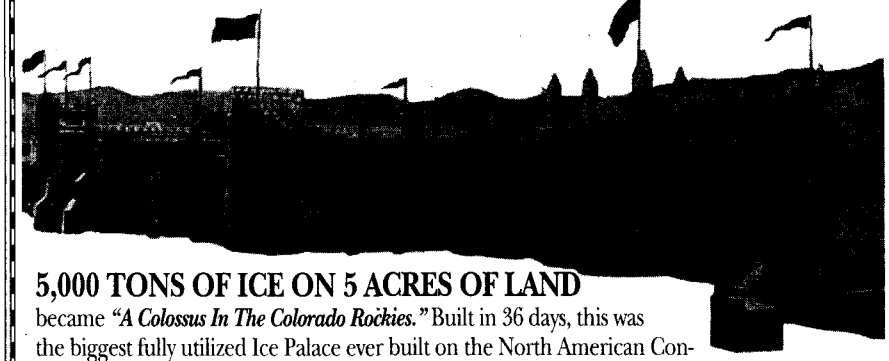
The museum's award-winning permanent anthropology exhibit, "Native Peoples of the Colorado Plateau," documents 12,000 years of human occupation of the plateau. The exhibit occupies galleries including a Hopi kiva room and a jewelry display.

In addition to the permanent exhibits, the museum presents a dynamic schedule of changing or special exhibits each year, including a summer-long celebration of Native American art. The museum is currently presenting "Sacred Lands of the Southwest" featuring the aerial photography of Harvey Lloyd, a renowned adventure-travel photographer. This exhibition celebrates the national parks, national monuments, Native American lands, and ancient ruins spread across the landscapes of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado, as seen from an eagle's perspective.

The museum is open from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. daily (with some evening hours) and closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Admission is $5.00 for adults and $3.00 for students with identification. Admission for seniors (fifty-five and up) is $4.00; children ages seven to seventeen are $2.00. For more information call (520) 774-5211 or write the museum at Route 4, Box 720, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001.


LEADVILLE'S

Ice Palace



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*About the Author*
Darlene Godat Weir became interested in the Ice Palace after learning her great grandfather had been a Dance Master in the Palace's ballroom. She has researched the history of Leadville's Ice Palace since 1967 and during the past 10 years has given many presentations about the Ice Palace throughout the State of Colorado.

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## OFF ARIZONA'S BEATEN PATH

# Taking a Look at Prehistory

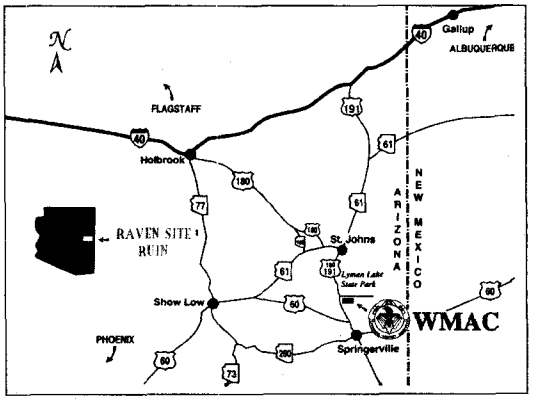
While the trucks and traffic thunder along I-40 and the tourist traps bark a continual "50% off all items!" just turn south, leave the four lanes of terror, and begin a family vacation that is inexpensive, educational, and exciting. The White Mountain Archaeological Center (WMAC) at Raven Site Ruin offers anyone age nine and older the chance to work alongside professional archaeologists excavating a "twin" Mogollon pueblo complex with over 800 rooms, two kivas, two mortarase rooms (grain repositories associated with the kivas' religious activities), and a central plaza.

Programs are designed for everyone and will expose participants to all aspects of archaeology, from excavation to labwork. All programs begin at 8:30 A.M. with an artifact orientation in the on-site laboratory. By 10:00 A.M. you and your family will be on the site with trowels in hand, knee pads in place, and an archaeologist at your elbow showing you proper excavation techniques. You'll find the square grid of earth in front of you hides the secrets of thousands of years. And when you gently remove the soil with your trowel, you will be the first to see the features and handle artifacts that have been hidden for centuries.

After a morning of excavation, a refreshing homemade lunch is served in the chow hall, with participants and archaeologists debating, discussing, and planning strategy. After lunch you may choose to return to your site, begin work in the laboratory, or perhaps even take a guided hike into the petroglyph areas and see the rock art associated with the site. Most folks are eager to get back to their grid and discover other secrets hidden in the wind-blown soil. Toward the end of the day, you will find yourself in the lab, cleaning, cataloguing and reconstructing the articfacts that have been recovered.

The White Mountain Archaeological Center at Raven Site Ruin facility is equipped with a restored bunkhouse for those who choose to stay overnight or participate in multiple-day programs. Enjoy the peace and quiet of one of the few lush, green valleys in the arid high desert. Tent space is available and self-contained RVs are welcome. Those requiring full hook-ups can take a ten minute trip down the street to Lyman Lake State Park.

WMAC day programs (8:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.) are $59 for adults, $37 for children ages nine through seventeen and include lunch. Overnight programs (24 hours) are $83 for adults, $61 for nine through seventeen and include meals and lodging. Weekly programs (six days, Monday-Saturday) are $498 for adults, $366 for children ages nine through seventeen, and include meals and lodging. If you just have an afternoon, stop by for one of the guided site tours offered at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M., and 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00 P.M. Cost is $3.50 for adults, $2.50 for seniors and ages twelve through seventeen. Children under twelve are free. For more information write the White Mountain Archaeological Center at HC 30 Box 30, St. Johns, Arizona 85936 or call (520) 333-5857.




White Mountain Archaeological Center
Raven Site is sixteen miles south of St. Johns and twelve miles north of Springerville off Route 180/191.



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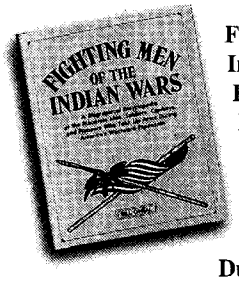


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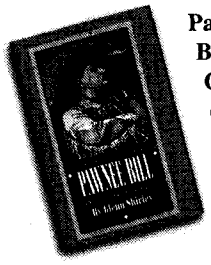


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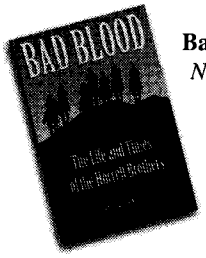


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# King George's War

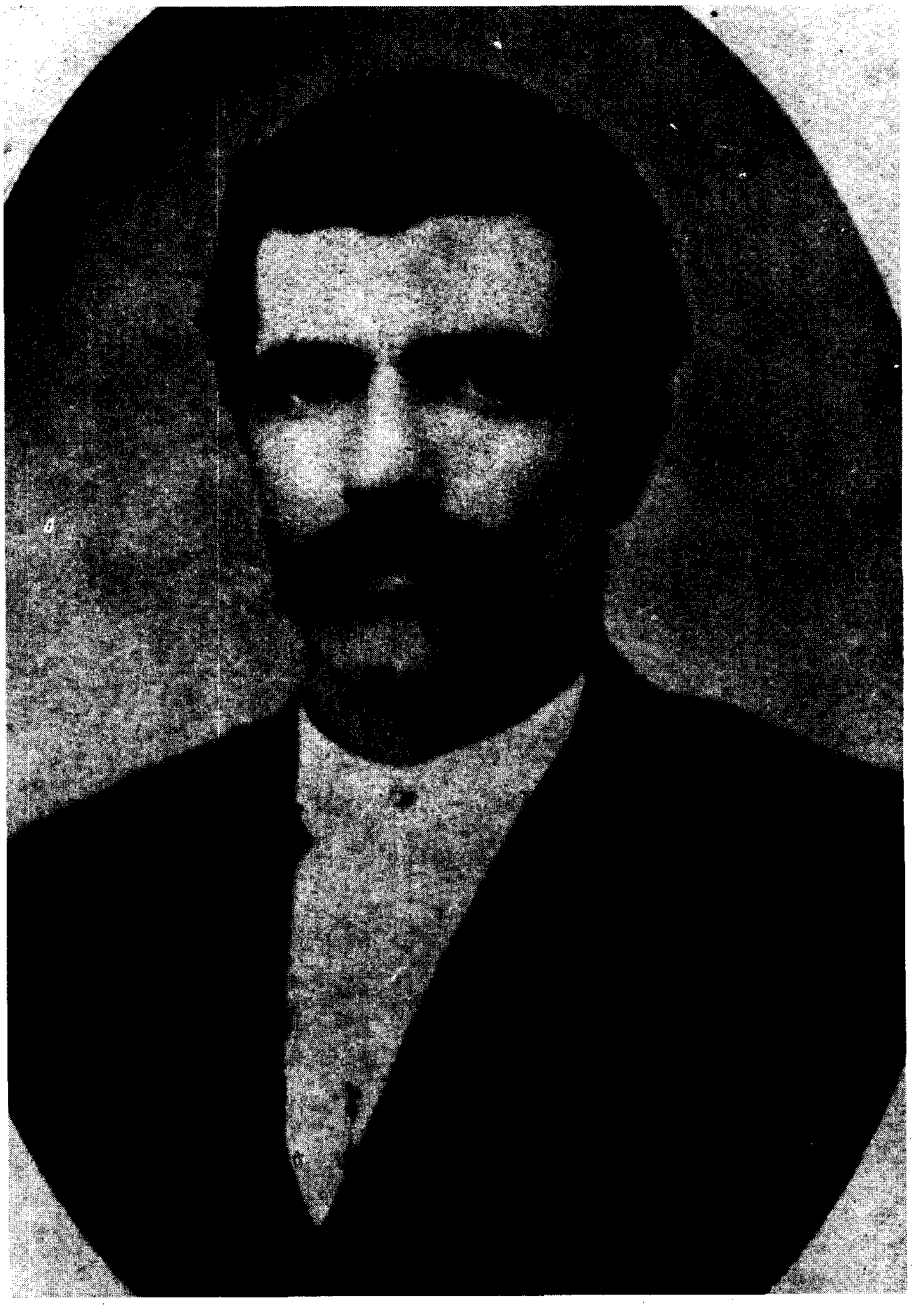
BY BILL O'NEAL

## 150 Years Ago

**November 28–29, 1745; Saratoga and Albany, New York.** Frontiersmen of the thirteen British colonies were frustrated in their westward movement by the presence of Frenchmen and their Indian allies. New France extended from Canada southward along the Appalachian Mountains through the Ohio Country, and westward past the Mississippi River to the Continental Divide. English colonists were well aware that the French claimed the country to the west, but at mid-century all of New France contained just 80,000 Frenchmen—while there were one and one-half million English settlers—80,000 of them in little Connecticut alone. The French could block the way west only through the strength of their alliances with powerful Indian confederates. By the late 1740s English settlers began trying to win over those Indians.

The Anglo-French rivalry erupted into open hostility in Europe in 1740 with the beginning of the War of the Austrian Succession, which would be fought for eight years. In 1744 fighting spilled over into North America under England's King George II. English colonials called the conflict King George's War. These frontiersmen bore the brunt of the war as they defended their isolated cabins and tiny settlements from raids by French soldiers and their Indian allies.

When New Yorkers began to win the allegiance of members of the



Kansas State Historical Society

"Bear River" Tom Smith, Abilene's popular and respected city marshal, was brutally slain on November 2, 1870.



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Iroquois Confederacy in 1745, the French launched a retaliatory expedition against the New York frontier. On November 28 the French struck Saratoga, burned the settlement, then marched on toward Albany, twenty-five miles south. At Albany, the French met determined resistance and fortified walls—the settlement was saved after one of the principal battles of King George's War.

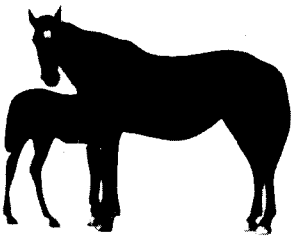
## 125 Years Ago

**November 2, 1870; near Abilene, Kansas.** On June 4, 1870, Thomas James Smith was appointed city marshal of Abilene, Kansas. A reputed former New York City policeman, Smith had worked for the Union Pacific Railroad and had tamed Wyoming's Bear River City and other end-of-track railroad towns. In Abilene, "Bear River" Tom patrolled the streets astride a magnificent mount, Silverheels, and he subdued troublesome cowboys with his fists. Appreciative city fathers raised Marshal Smith's monthly wage from $150 to $225.

On November 2, 1870, Smith and Deputy J. H. McDonald rode out of Abilene to serve a warrant on homesteader Andrew McConnell, who had shot and killed his neighbor, John Shea. The lawmen found and confronted McConnell and his friend, Moses Miles, at McConnell's dugout ten miles outside Abilene.

As Smith read the warrant, McConnell pumped a slug into his chest. Smith instantly returned the shot, wounding McConnell. The two bleeding men grappled, while Miles and McDonald began trading gunfire. Though hit, Miles continued firing and drove McDonald off the premises. Miles then turned and clubbed Smith to the ground. McConnell and Miles dragged the fallen officer several yards from the dugout. There Miles nearly severed Smith's head with an axe.

A grieving community attended the thirty-year-old Smith's burial. Captured three days after the killing, Miles was sentenced to sixteen years in prison, McConnell to twelve.

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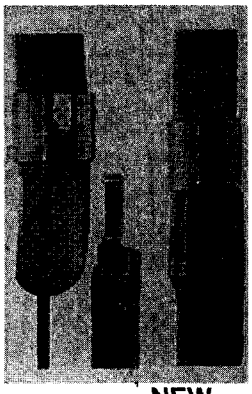

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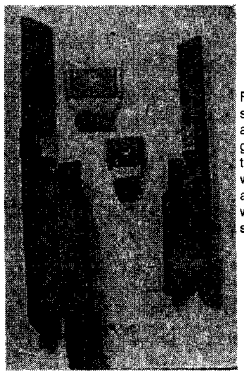

**November 4, 1870; Verdi, Nevada.** John T. Chapman was a novice at crime with ambitions to rob a train. He enlisted another amateur, carpenter R.A. Jones, along with four experienced criminals: John Squires, James Gilchrist, Tilton Cockerill, and Jack Davis. A stagecoach robber who had stolen so much ore that he built a mill to process his loot, Davis became the gang's leader.

Chapman went to San Francisco, discovered that Wells, Fargo was shipping $40,000 in gold and silver coins to Reno on November 4, and sent details to his confederates by code. Davis and his four men gathered at tiny Verdi station in western Nevada, where Central Pacific's Train No. 1 would make a brief night stop before proceeding to Reno.

As the train pulled away from Verdi, the five thieves jumped aboard. Two of them pulled guns on the engineer and fireman while the other three threw down on the conductor and passengers. Conductor D.G. Marshall pulled the bell cord to halt the train, but the bandits had already cut the line.

The robbers had the engineer halt the train on a downgrade and uncoupled the rear cars. About six miles past Verdi the engine and express cars were stopped. The robbers locked the engineer, fireman, and express messenger in the postal compartment of the car, then picked the safe. After emptying the coins into sacks, the gang disappeared into the darkness.

Wells, Fargo officials immediately dispatched a large force of investigators, led by F.T. Burke. Concentrating their efforts on bustling Reno, the detectives soon collared three men who were spending money liberally. The investigators learned that all three men knew each other. Expertly interrogating Jones, Burke learned the names of all the gang members and the details of their plan. The six thieves were arrested and $37,000 of the stolen money was recovered.

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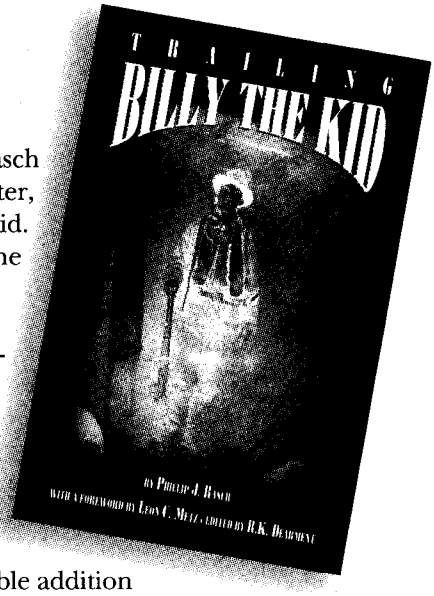
# TRAILING BILLY THE KID

## By Philip J. Rasch

### Edited by Robert K. DeArment • With an Introduction by Leon C. Metz

*Fifty years ago, Philip J. Rasch started trailing Billy the Kid. Ever since, the rest of the historians have been trailing Phil.*

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# "THIS IS THE GREAT

# THE HANGING OF AUGUSTÍ

By HAROLD L. EDWARDS

Around 8:00 P.M. on December 18, 1895, Manager Paul Becker closed the McCormick general store in Morenci, Arizona, for the day and left the building. He intended to return later as his living quarters were in back of the store. While Becker was dining, at least two sneak thieves broke into the store. Becker returned about 11:00 P.M., and while walking to his quarters he thought he heard a noise. He turned on the store lights and found himself confronted by two armed men. One of the intruders pointed a revolver at him while the other threatened him with a dirk knife.

The burglars ordered Becker to open the store safe. The twenty-six-year-old, German-born Becker was made of stern stuff, and although he was unarmed and helpless, he did not panic. Perhaps showing more courage than judgment, he refused to comply. Instead, he grabbed the man with the knife while he knocked away the other man's revolver. The gunman did not shoot as Becker struggled with his knife-wielding assailant. During the fight, Becker was slashed several times about his arms and body. Finally, the intruders knocked him down, and while he lay dazed on the floor, they took his watch and twenty-five dollars in cash.

As Becker pulled himself up from the floor, the burglars again demanded that he open the store safe. Instead he bolted for a nearby window. As he struggled to open the window, the robbers overtook him. The plucky clerk again put up a fight, and this time the knifeman plunged his dirk deep into Becker's side. As Becker slumped to the floor, his assailants ran from the building and escaped into the night.

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Miraculously, the determined storekeeper regained his feet and staggered from the store to nearby Short's Saloon. He stumbled into the barroom with the dirk still in his side. There Graham County Deputy Sheriff Alex Davis saw Becker's deplorable condition and quickly removed the knife. Davis sent for a doctor and, while other saloon patrons aided Becker, went to the McCormick store to look around.

By lantern light, the deputy saw the footprints of at least two men leading from the store. Unable to track the culprits in the dark, the lawman returned to Short's Saloon to see after Becker, who amazingly survived his wounds.

That morning, Davis organized a posse consisting of H.D. Kepler, John Smith, G.W. Evans, and Pablo Salcido. The possemen followed the burglars' tracks from the store to the home of Santiago Contreras. When the officers were some seventy yards from the Contreras house, they saw three men run from the building to some large rocks on a nearby hill. As the posse approached, the men in the rocks opened fire. Unscathed, the lawmen quickly returned the outlaws' fire.

As the spirited gunfight escalated, members of the posse recognized their foes as well-known Morenci residents Augustín Chacón, Simon Lopez, and Santiago Contreras.



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# ST DAY OF MY LIFE"

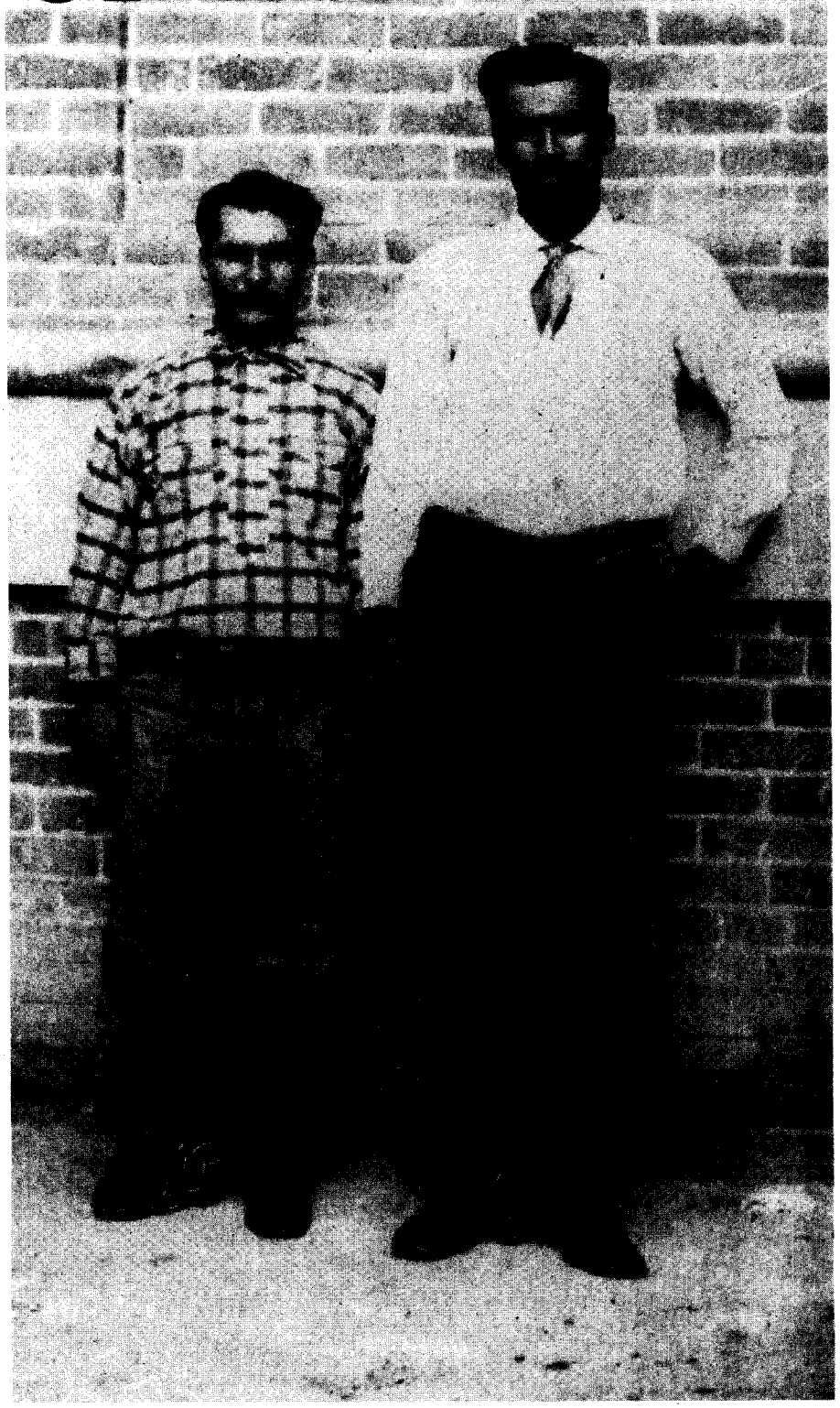
## CHACÓN

Suddenly, Lopez and Contreras dashed from the rocks and disappeared over the brow of the hill. To cover their escape, Chacón stayed behind and pinned down the lawmen.

Pablo Salcido recognized Chacón as the remaining shooter. He told Davis that he had known Chacón for several years and believed he could negotiate a peaceful surrender. Despite Davis' misgivings Salcido persisted, and in the end Davis allowed him to approach Chacón. When Salcido reached a point within a few yards of Chacón's position, the fugitive started shooting again, hitting Salcido in the head, killing him instantly.

The posse poured a heavy fire on Chacón until they heard no more shots from the rocks. Cautiously, they approached the rocks with their guns held at the ready. They found Chacón lying behind the rocks with a wounded shoulder and a graze across his chest, unable to move. The officers carried him to the local jail, where his injuries were tended.

Meanwhile, Chacón's cohorts escaped. The December 20, 1895, *Arizona Republican* reported that the fugitives had been captured, but it ran a different story five days later. The paper reported an incident in



Arizona Historical Society

Augustín Chacón (right) and Juan Chavez (left) while in jail at Solomonville.



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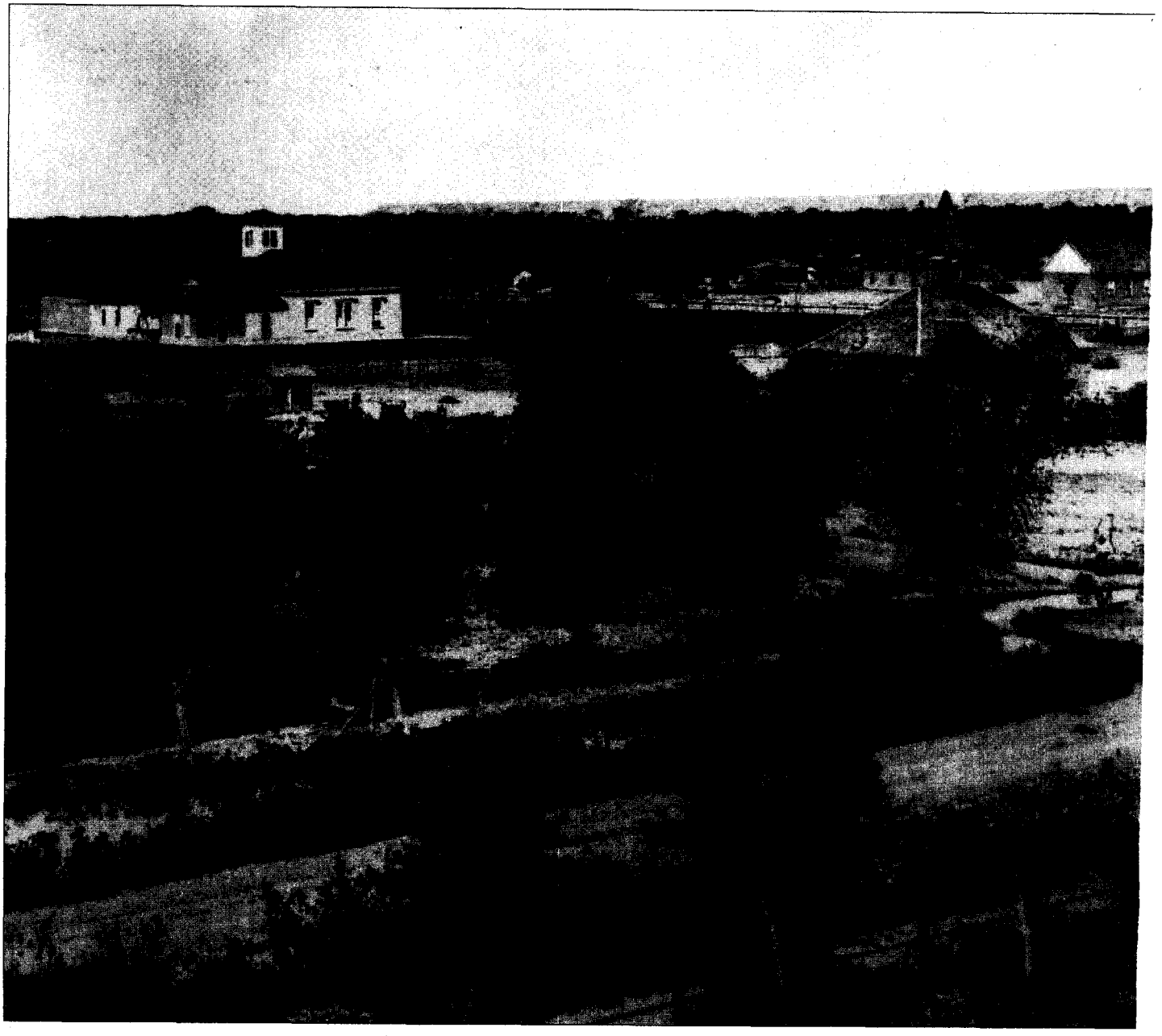
which officers killed two of five robbers, wounding one bandit who was subsequently captured. That, of course, was a muddled account of the skirmish in which Augustín Chacón was wounded and captured. The press further confused the matter by variously identifying the burglars as Pilar Luna, Pilar Franco, Leonardo Morales, Dionicido Morales, Santiago Dados, and Santiago Contreras. Those 1895 reports have muddied the waters ever since.

In any event, the officers knew for certain that they had Augustín Chacón in custody. After Chacón was charged with the murder of Pablo Salcido, he awaited his appointment with the court in Solomonville's Graham County jail. He managed to escape once by simply walking out of the jail. But his disappearance was discovered immediately. After a general search, W.B. Kelly found him hiding in a nearby irrigation ditch and promptly rearrested him. With the help of local citizens, Kelly escorted Chacón back to jail.

Chacón's date with the court finally arrived the week of May 26, 1896. His court appointed attorneys, William Lovell, R. Patterson, and John McCollum, defended him. Chacón pleaded innocent, claiming that Salcido was shot and killed by Pilar Luna. Chacón further contended that Salcido was his friend and that he never would have killed a friend. Nonetheless, the jury found Chacón guilty, and the court sentenced him to be hanged on July 2, 1896.

Chacón's attorneys immediately filed an appeal before the Arizona territorial supreme court, which postponed the execution while it



Solomonville, Arizona Territory, at the time of Augustín Chacón's imprisonment and execution.



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considered the case. In the meantime, authorities moved Chacón to the Pima County jail in Tucson for safe-keeping. In January 1897, the supreme court upheld Chacón's conviction and sentence. He was returned to the Graham County court, where Judge Owen T. Rouse reset the execution for June 18, 1897, in the Solomonville jail yard.

Death penalty opponents in Arizona petitioned the governor to commute Chacón's sentence to life imprisonment in Yuma territorial prison. While that effort failed, Chacón had his own plans to avoid the gallows. Someone smuggled a saw blade in to him, and the night of June 9, 1897, he cut through the wood planks that lined his cell. He next burrowed through an adobe wall into the jail corridor, then through an outside adobe wall, and escaped.

While posses searched the area for Chacón, he made his way back to his home country in Sonora, Mexico. Born in Sonora of poor parents around 1860, he worked as a farmhand, laborer, and vaquero before migrating to the United States in 1888 or 1889. Chacón settled in Morenci, Arizona, where he worked variously as a cowboy and a miner.

After he disappeared from the Solomonville jail, Chacón's name was linked to all kinds of crimes, and he became a border legend. According to the press, he became an outlaw chieftain dubbed *Peludo*, "the hairy one," because of his full beard. It was said that he personally killed between twelve and fourteen Americans and even more Mexicans. It was also claimed that he boasted of these gruesome murders. His name was even associated with unsolved murders that occurred in Graham County prior to the Salcido killing. As the stories of his exploits grew, the more his recapture and hanging became a top priority for Arizona officers.

In spite of his notoriety, Chacón eluded the law until 1902, some five years after his escape from the Solomonville jail., Even then, the efforts and determination of just one man, Captain Burton Mossman of the Arizona Rangers, led to his arrest.

To combat the lawlessness prevailing at the turn of the century, the territorial legislature created the Arizona Rangers. The Rangers were a constabulary with broad law enforcement powers which extended beyond county jurisdictions. Burton Mossman was appointed their first captain. Mossman was not a professional lawman, but a successful cattleman and ranch manager. In 1898, the Illinois-born, thirty-two-year-old Mossman had taken charge of the giant Hash Knife ranch near Holbrook, Arizona. At the time, local rustlers and even its own employees plagued the ranch with cattle thefts. Armed with a deputy's commission from Apache County Sheriff F.J. Wattron, the new, tough-minded manager cleaned up the rustling and put the Hash Knife back on a paying basis. He had a reputation for being honest, shrewd, tough, firm, and efficient—further, the no-nonsense Mossman would not back away from a fight.

Mossman was just the man to captain the newly created Arizona Rangers. He and his new agency performed commendably that first year of 1901. Augustín Chacón, however, remained free to pursue his banditry on the border. Chacón's arrest and hanging became a matter of personal pride for Mossman. He realized that the Mexican government would be reluctant to arrest Chacón, a Mexican citizen, and return him to the United States for execution. He also knew that Colonel Emilio Kosterlitsky and his Rurales would shoot Chacón on sight if they found him. In either case, Chacón would cheat the noose in Arizona.

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The only alternative would be for an American official to surreptitiously seize Chacón in Mexico and bring him back to the United States—essentially an illegal act of international kidnapping. Despite the serious repercussions on Mexican-United States relations, American law officers often resorted to such measures to apprehend fugitives whom the Mexican government refused to extradite.

A fluent Spanish speaker, Mossman decided personally to sneak into Mexico to arrest Chacón. He would need help from someone he could count on, someone who also enjoyed Chacón's trust. After extensive consideration Mossman found the man to undertake the delicate mission: Burt Alvord.

A veteran Arizona peace officer, Alvord had served as a deputy to noted Cochise County Sheriff John Slaughter in the late 1880s. Later, he served as constable of Pierce, Arizona, and after that, constable of Willcox. By the late 1890s, however, Alvord began working the other side of the law. By 1899 he and his deputy, Billy Stiles, were leading a band of train robbers. The gang had robbed two trains before the authorities knew Alvord and Stiles were involved. The renegade lawmen were arrested for train robbery but escaped from the Tombstone jail and were hiding in Sonora, Mexico. Alvord was in the Sierra Madre, Stiles in the border town of Naco.

Certain that Alvord was in contact with Chacón, Mossman learned, through Billy Stiles, where he was hiding and rode alone into the Mexican wilderness to find him. Late in the afternoon of April 22, 1902, Mossman rode up to a small stone house, where he expected to find Alvord. As he approached the house, Mossman saw a man standing in the doorway holding a rifle across his arm. From his manners and description, Mossman knew that he had found his man.

When the Ranger told Alvord who he was, the fugitive responded, "The hell you are." Mossman explained in detail what he wanted and offered an incentive for Alvord's help. The lawman promised to do all he could to get a minimum sentence for Alvord if the outlaw returned to Arizona and stood trial on the charge against him.

Mossman's plan called for Alvord to bring Chacón to a prearranged meeting. There, unbeknown to Chacón, Mossman would be waiting to arrest him. Alvord agreed to consider the proposal, and Ranger Mossman rode back to Arizona to await his decision.

In the meantime, Graham County Sheriff James Parks had the same idea for Chacón's capture. He, too, tracked down Billy Stiles, who told him of Mossman's plan. Parks in turn contacted Mossman, and they agreed to work together with Alvord and Stiles.

*Alvord told Chacón that Mossman was a fellow horse thief. Chacón, however, remained suspicious of Mossman and watched him constantly. Chacón continued to stare at Mossman as the men sat around the campfire. When the others talked Chacón remained silent. Mossman did not know how far he could trust Alvord and Stiles, but he knew to succeed he would have to act fast. He waited for his chance.*

Since Stiles worked at Colonel William Greene's Cananea Copper mine just below the border and was accessible to the officers, he served as the contact man. Mossman met frequently with Stiles, even putting him on expenses as an Arizona Ranger—without, however, making him an official Ranger. Then several months passed without contact from either Stiles or Alvord, and Mossman and Parks began to think their plan had failed.

Burt Alvord, though, had been working his way slowly into Chacón's confidence, setting the long-planned trap. Alvord met with the outlaw often, each time suggesting stealing some of Colonel Greene's horses, pastured near Naco. Stiles, who occasionally accompanied Alvord, always encouraged the raid. Chacón, however, remained suspicious and avoided committing himself to their plans.

To gain Chacón's confidence, Alvord and Stiles proposed stealing some mules pastured on a ranch near the border. Finally, Chacón consented and the three men rode for the border. As the thieves drove the mules from the pasture, the ranch owner saw them and opened up on them with his rifle. The would-be thieves abandoned the mules but escaped without injury.

ON AUGUST 31, 1902, Alvord telegraphed Sheriff Parks asking for a meeting in Naco; however, when the wire arrived, Parks was delivering a prisoner at the Yuma territorial prison. About the same time, Mossman received a similar telegram from Billy Stiles. Mossman's plan to capture Augustín Chacón had been set in motion, but his one-year commission would soon expire and he would no longer officially be a Ranger. Mossman took the risk and rode into Mexico after Chacón anyway.

In Naco, Stiles handed Mossman a note from Alvord. It instructed him to meet Alvord, Stiles, and Chacón at Socorro Mountain, about twenty-five miles south of Naco. Mossman was to pose as an American horse thief who was in Mexico to help Alvord, Stiles, and Chacón steal Colonel Greene's horses. Mossman started immediately for Socorro Mountain, taking along Stiles, whom he did not completely trust.

Just south of the international line Mossman and Stiles saw two



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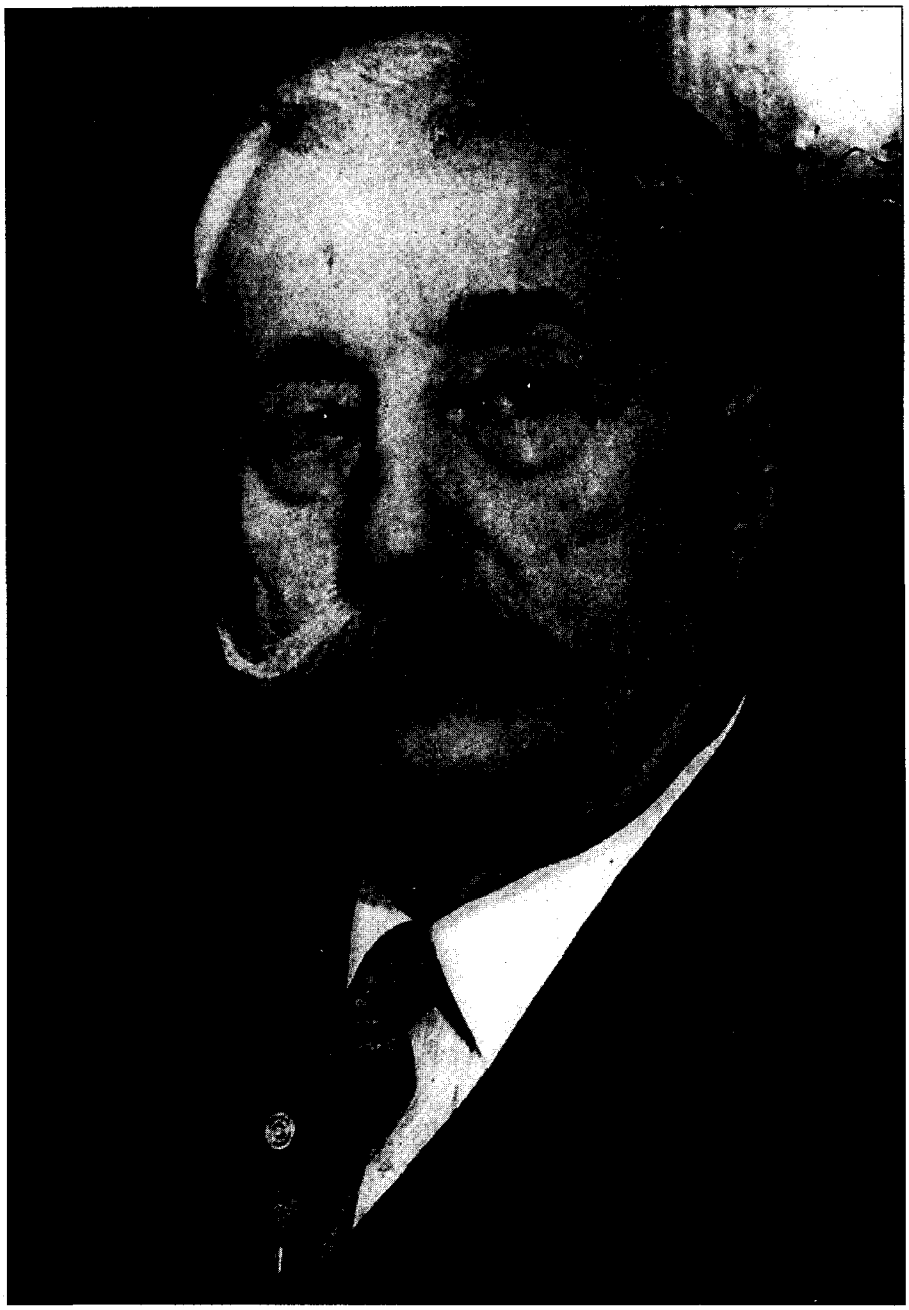
horsemen approaching. To the Ranger's surprise the two riders were Alvord and Chacón. The foursome rode north until they found a campsite on the Mexican side of the border. Alvord told Chacón that Mossman was a fellow horse thief. Chacón, however, remained suspicious of Mossman and watched him constantly. Chacón continued to stare at Mossman as the men sat around the campfire. When the others talked Chacón remained silent. Mossman did not know how far he could trust Alvord and Stiles, but he knew to succeed he would have to act fast. He waited for his chance.

AS THE OUTLAWS sat around the fire, they discussed the coming raid on Colonel Greene's horses. The conversation then turned to tall tales and yarns. Meanwhile, Chacón never stopped watching Mossman. The lawman remained apprehensive and stayed awake all night. He huddled in his slicker for warmth against the chill air, eyeing the others and keeping a hand on his concealed pistol.

In the morning, Alvord touched Mossman on the shoulder and said that he was going to get some fresh water. He saddled his horse and rode from the camp. Mossman understood that Alvord was leaving, having delivered Chacón as agreed. Obviously suspicious Chacón watched Alvord ride away but said nothing and continued to watch Mossman.

After the men ate breakfast Chacón asked why Alvord had not returned. Mossman knew he had to arrest Chacón before the bandit got any more suspicious and started shooting. All three men lit cigarettes with flaming sticks from the fire. Mossman let his cigarette go out. Leaning forward to get another stick from the fire, Mossman quickly drew his revolver, cocked it, and pointed it at Chacón. He ordered the outlaw to raise his hands, and Chacón obeyed.

Mossman threw down on Stiles and ordered him to handcuff Chacón. That done, Mossman commanded Stiles to saddle the horses, and the three men headed for the border. Stiles rode in front leading Chacón. The Ranger brought up the rear, covering them with his rifle as they rode back to the border.



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Burton Mossman in his later years. Mossman captured Augustín Chacón in Mexico on September 2, 1902.

At Naco, Mossman ordered Stiles to turn west and bypass the town. Slipping into the United States unseen, they rode north until they intercepted the Southern Pacific Railroad's tracks. There they waited until a passenger train arrived. Mossman and his prisoner boarded the train and rode to Benson, while Stiles continued with the horses to Casa Grande.

Quite by accident, Mossman met Sheriff Parks on the depot platform in Benson. Parks was delighted to see Mossman with his prisoner. He had no idea that the Ranger had gone into Mexico after Chacón. Parks took custody of the prisoner and escorted him to the Solomonville jail while Mossman got some badly needed rest.

A newspaper reporter from the *Bisbee Review* interviewed the pris-



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Arizona Historical Society

oner on the train to Solomonville. "Where are you going?" asked the reporter.

Chacón responded, "I suppose they are taking me to Solomonville, and I want them to kill me this time. I prefer death to a term in the penitentiary."

The reporter observed, "Chacón has broken rapidly in the past five years. His form is bent and his beard is tinged with gray. To be hunted like a wild animal for five years has left its mark on the out-

Graham County Sheriff James Parks officiated at Augustín Chacón's hanging on November 21, 1902.

Arizona State Library and Archives

Augustín Chacón on the gallows at his execution. Sheriff James Parks is the man in the black hat, standing next to Chacón.



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law, who is again in jail from whence he escaped five years ago." The description hardly matched the far-ranging, worry-free Chacón of legend.

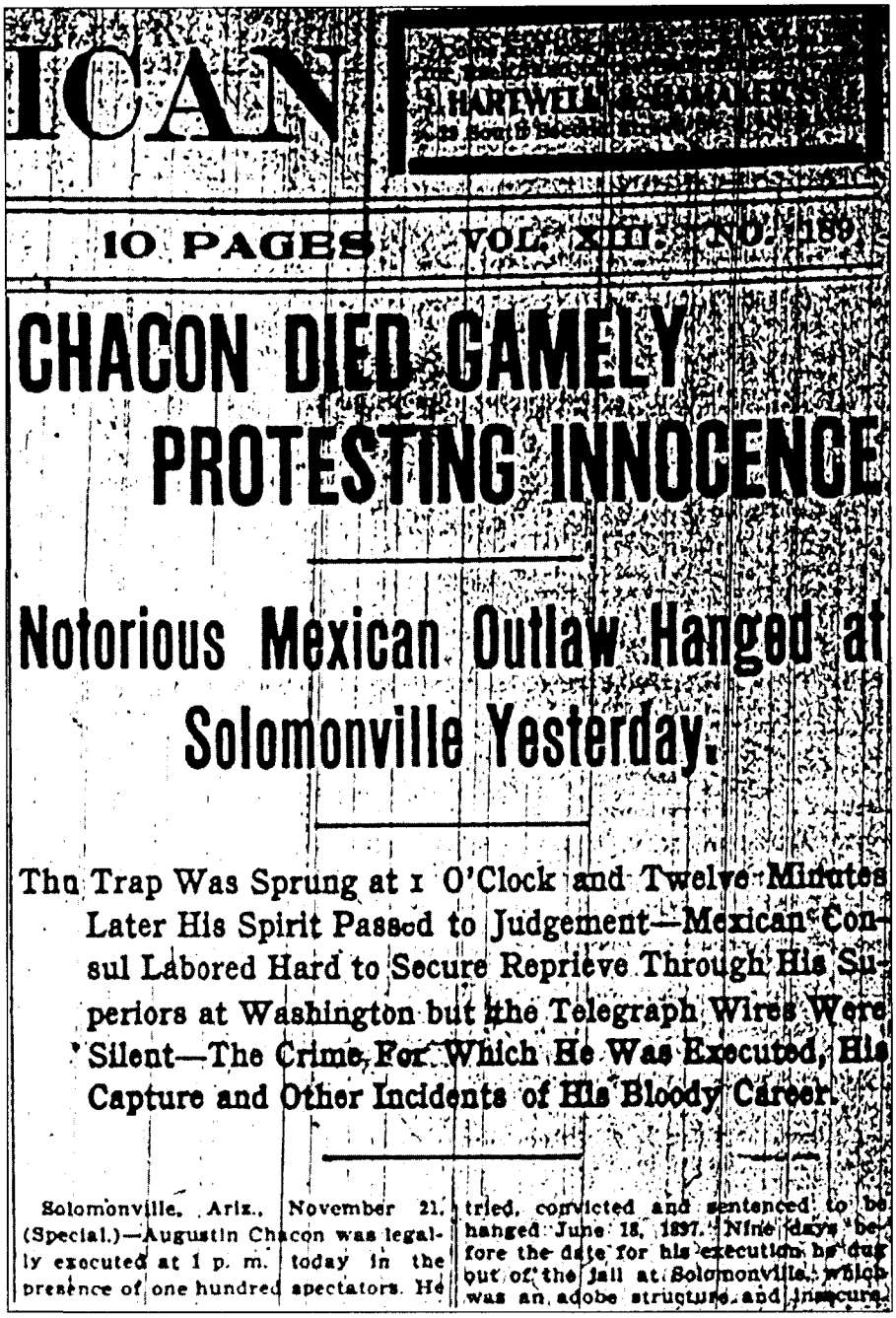
The Arizona press reported extensively on Chacón's capture. Although the actual arrest occurred in Mexico, the press stated that Mossman captured Chacón near the Sneed ranch, some seven miles north of the border in Arizona. The Mexican government never made an issue of Chacón's arrest.

The court in Solomonville fixed Chacón's new execution date for November 14, 1902. While awaiting his hanging, Chacón was friendly and talkative. He seemed resigned to his fate, and he held no grudge against anyone except Billy Stiles. He did not seem to realize the role that Burt Alvord had played in his capture and arrest.

Within days after Chacón's capture, Alvord surrendered to Cochise County Sheriff Del Lewis. The territorial charge against him was dismissed; however, the federal government charged him with interfering with the United States mails, and he served two years in Yuma territorial prison. Stiles left Arizona and in 1908 was shot to death while serving as a deputy sheriff in Humbolt County, Nevada.

WHILE CHACON awaited the hangman, death penalty opponents again petitioned the governor to commute Chacón's sentence to life imprisonment. Again, they failed. Chacón's attorneys filed a writ of habeas corpus before the United States court, but the federal judge denied the writ, which condemned the prisoner to die on November 21, 1902. The Mexican consul's last minute efforts to prevent the execution also failed.

Just before 1:00 P.M. on November 21, 1902, Father DeRitchermont, a Catholic Priest, gave Augustín Chacón his last rites. He was then escorted to the gallows by Sheriff Parks and several of his deputies. Even though shackled, Chacón ascended the gallows strong and composed, climbing the stairs unassisted. He never admitted to killing Salcido; nevertheless, he turned to Sheriff Parks and said that he regarded that day as the greatest day of his life. The hood was adjusted over his head, and as he stood on the trap he said in a clear voice to the spectators, "Adios, Amigos." At 1:00 P.M. Sheriff Parks sprung the trap. The condemned man was pronounced dead in twelve minutes. His body was released to his friends for burial.



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CHACON DIED GAMELY PROTESTING INNOCENCE

Notorious Mexican Outlaw Hanged at Solomonville Yesterday.

The Trap Was Sprung at 1 O'Clock and Twelve Minutes Later His Spirit Passed to Judgement—Mexican Consul Labored Hard to Secure Reprieve Through His Superiors at Washington but the Telegraph Wires Were Silent—The Crime For Which He Was Executed, His Capture and Other Incidents of His Bloody Career.

Solomonville, Ariz., November 21. (Special.)—Augustin Chacon was legally executed at 1 p. m. today in the presence of one hundred spectators. He tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged June 18, 1897. Nine days before the date for his execution he dug out of the jail at Solomonville, which was an adobe structure and insecure.

Author's Collection

Chacón's execution made headlines in the November 22, 1902, *Arizona Republican.*

The *Arizona Republican*, reported, "Though [Chacón's] crimes were numerous and many of them perhaps unknown, he has no doubt been made a scapegoat for others on more than one occasion and murders have been laid at his door of which he has not been guilty." In any event the hanging of Augustín Chacón ended the life of one of Arizona's most legendary outlaws.



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# Jailhou

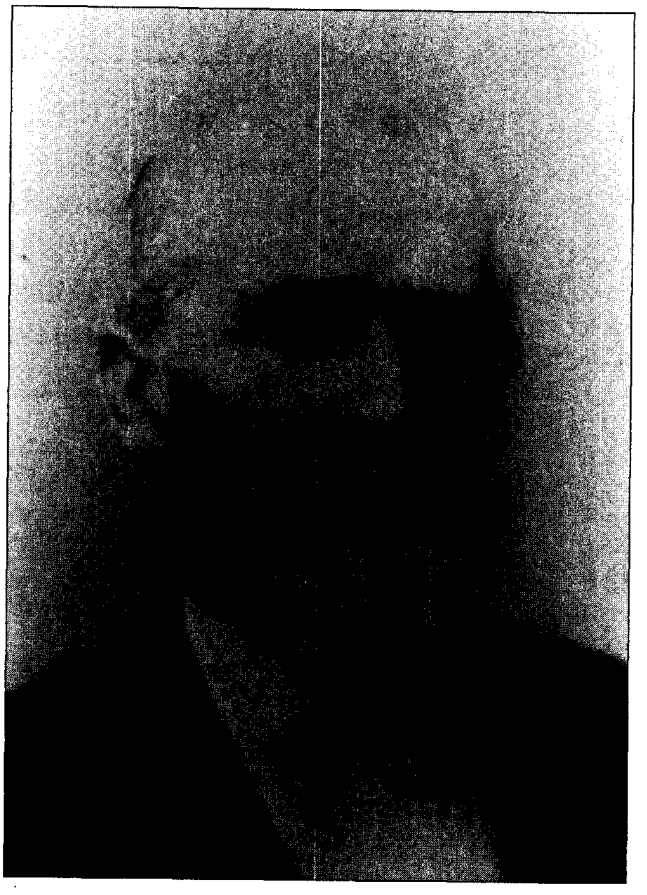
## THE FRONTIER WIT OF W

### By MICHAE

Even as America's wilderness frontier waned like the moon before the advancing shadow of modern civilization, important events were still shaping the West's history and creating its legends. Through that twilight era, one elderly man named William Wallace Kennedy spent his final twenty-one years as a peace officer in the bustling river port of Napa, California.

Known more frequently by his friends and acquaintances as "Wall" or "Old Bill," Kennedy referred to himself as "Old Desperate." Whether that sobriquet commemorated the challenges he had faced as a long-haul teamster, overland pioneer, gold-rush prospector, homesteading farmer, Union soldier, railroad foreman, and deputy sheriff or an incorrigible comic performer's innate anxiety over goading a laugh from an audience remains unclear. If the latter, Kennedy must have given himself the moniker in a rare moment when his characteristic humility applied self-effacing reins to the hard-charging mustangs that drove his creative nature. For Wall Kennedy stood high among that adroit-tongued fraternity of storytellers, pranksters, and monumental prevaricators who salted the western experience with their rich imaginations.

Kennedy had more than a gift for bending peoples' mouths around to reach their ears or causing their stomachs to convulse in the throes of jocularity. He was a man of philosophic bent and constructive action. Leading his inmate chain gang out each morning with a shout of "All aboard for Hangtown!" to assiduously maintain Napa's streets, carrying out his numerous charitable acts for the poor or down-and-out, and telling his incredible tales to elicit merriment wherever he went, Wall became an esteemed community icon. Decades after his death, old-timers who had known him still spoke of his passing with grief.



Courtesy Napa County Historical Society

William Wallace Kennedy, circa 1895.

Born in Lafayette, Tippecanoe County, Indiana, on December 10, 1833, Wall was twelve years old when he left home to work as a teamster's assistant at Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River. About 1500 civilians had assembled there, along with 300 dragoons and other United States soldiers commanded by General Stephen W. Kearny for the march on Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the start of the Mexican War.

Wall did the dirtiest, most onerous tasks that long-haul teamstering could demand from the time they left Fort Leavenworth on June 30, 1846, until Santa Fe fell to the Americans without a fight on August 18. Homesick, Wall decided not to continue with Kearny's force over the Old Spanish Trail into southern California. Instead, risking attacks by Kiowas and Comanches, he returned with other civilians over 800 miles of untamed deserts and plains, safely reaching Missouri far more mature than his thirteen years would indicate.



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# lse Wall

## .LIAM WALLACE KENNEDY

## . CHEGWYN

Wall worked on his older brother's Missouri farm, in Buchanan County, for another year, then went back to Indiana. In the spring of 1849 he purchased a wagon and cattle and headed west once more. He became a forty-niner, one of those hopeful argonauts rushing into California after John Marshall's discovery of gold on the American River at Coloma.

Wall and his party departed about May 10, 1849, over the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall, Idaho, then through Nevada over the California Trail. They entered California by way of the Lassen Cut-off about September 10. Wall began mining at Spanish Ravine in El Dorado County. He worked that claim for six years and also prospected around Tuolumne City farther south. During that time he often visited Hangtown, formerly called Dry Diggings, and later renamed Placerville in 1854. By any name, Hangtown would have been the Sierra Mother Lode's roughest mining camp at that time.

"Upon arriving at Hangtown," according to an 1899 article in the California magazine *The Pioneer*, Wall "cleaned out all the bullies who had tyrannized over the miners...One especially who had been the terror of all the mining camps [was] the notorious 'Wooley,' a desperado and hero of many rough encounters in '49. 'Old Desperate' settled his hash in about fifteen minutes."

Courtesy Napa County Historical Society

"Old Desperate" performs his tall tales "in costume" at the Napa County Courthouse, September 1899.

Small-crew placer mining went into decline by the mid-1850s. The end of the gold rush brought prospectors down from the mountains like the snowflakes falling on the Sierras. Wall followed suit, moving to Napa, California, where he worked a Napa Valley farm owned by Dwight Spencer. He appears to have cultivated more than the soil, as he was married in Napa for the first time. He and Annie Hogan, sister of Napa Hotel proprietor John Hogan, were united May 3, 1859. Their twenty-year marriage produced two sons and two daughters.

In September 1859 Wall reversed his own trail and returned to Indiana, where he and Annie lived out the winter before shifting to Missouri. Wall bought a farm in Buchanan County in 1860, but sectional conflict already had soaked the western part of the state in blood. When the irregular violence escalated into civil war with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, Wall eagerly stepped forward for Union service.



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With Annie and a month-old daughter safely removed to Brownville, Nebraska, Wall joined a pro-Union militia company that participated in the Battle of Wilson's Creek, just south of Springfield, Missouri, on August 10, 1861. The Confederates soundly thrashed the hastily-gathered Union troops. Among the 223 wounded Union soldiers, Wall Kennedy took a Confederate rifle ball through his right thigh.

Kennedy recuperated in Nebraska but was galvanized back to the blue-clad ranks by the brief capture of Independence, Missouri, on August 11, 1862, by William Clarke Quantrill's freebooting Confederate guerrillas. Within days of the raid Wall was deployed to the Thirty-Fifth Missouri Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

He served for nine months and was among the Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant that fought across Mississippi in April and May 1863, cutting the Confederate Army in half. The Union Army's drive stalled before the Mississippi River port of Vicksburg, and the city was under bitter siege until it fell on July 4, 1863. Early in the siege Wall was wounded in the head and shoulder.

Wall's combat injuries knocked him out of the rest of the Civil War. Upon recovering, he got his discharge, rejoined his wife and daughter in Nebraska, and in 1864, migrated west for the last time.

After settling once more in Napa, California, Wall worked as a foreman on the Santa Rosa Railway Line for the next fifteen years. He helped raise his children and chugged along on the rails connecting the redwoods to Bay tidewater until 1879, when two pivotal events altered both his personal and professional circumstances.

A change in his private life occurred when Annie Hogan Kennedy died on October 10, 1879, leaving him with their four offspring. After a respectable interval Wall remarried, sharing nuptials with a former Mrs. Dennison who also had a daughter by her previous marriage.

Wall's professional situation changed in 1879 when he was hired as a Napa County deputy sheriff and county jailer. That was a milestone in Wall's life, because the jobs provided him with a public stage upon which to present himself as an engaging village raconteur.

Now Wall's wild flights of fancy around Napa's Courthouse Square were officially sanctioned. His entertaining turn of mind, dedication to his work, and eternally amicable disposition made him congenial to everyone, particularly to the legal and commercial elite of that mercantile community as well as to the newspaper reporters who wrote about them. Those people had important metropolitan connections, and they helped spread Wall's humorous fictions throughout the state, the nation, and even to continental Europe.

Holding down the county jailer's post meant being more than a turnkey. Wall administered the jail on the Second Street side of the domed courthouse's first floor. Although he was officially called chief prisoners' guard, Wall's duties made him a supply quartermaster, armed escort, and janitor for the facility.

Wall's major responsibility as jailer was supervising the chain gang, the labor force of convicts put to work almost daily constructing and repairing Napa's streets. Since Napa's founding in 1847, its inhabitants had generally shared the belief that one of government's main purposes was to keep taxes low, even as for more than thirty years they roundly cursed the dangerous condition of city and county thoroughfares.

SOME PREPOSTEROUS solutions were advanced to remedy the problem. The Napa *Register* of March 28, 1878, for example, carried a suggestion for "patent rubber bustles, inflated with hydrogen gas, as a means to assist Napa demoiselles to trip airily and keep from getting stuck by lifting them from the mud with which the streets abound." Notwithstanding that potentially explosive recommendation, the county jail's chain gang seemed the best way to improve streets and municipal services under a limited government.

Wall labored alongside his prisoners to construct stone gutters, dig drains, lay out brick foot-crossings and sidewalks, as well as to pave streets, scrape mud from road surfaces, and flush out sewers. His crew also chopped wood to heat the courthouse and did maintenance work there. The prisoners under Wall's keep were all petty offenders, not felons, and despite the misnomer, there was no chain on Wall's chain gang. He rarely wore a badge and never toted a club, whip, or gun.

Author's Photo

Hangtown, California, as it appeared in 1849.



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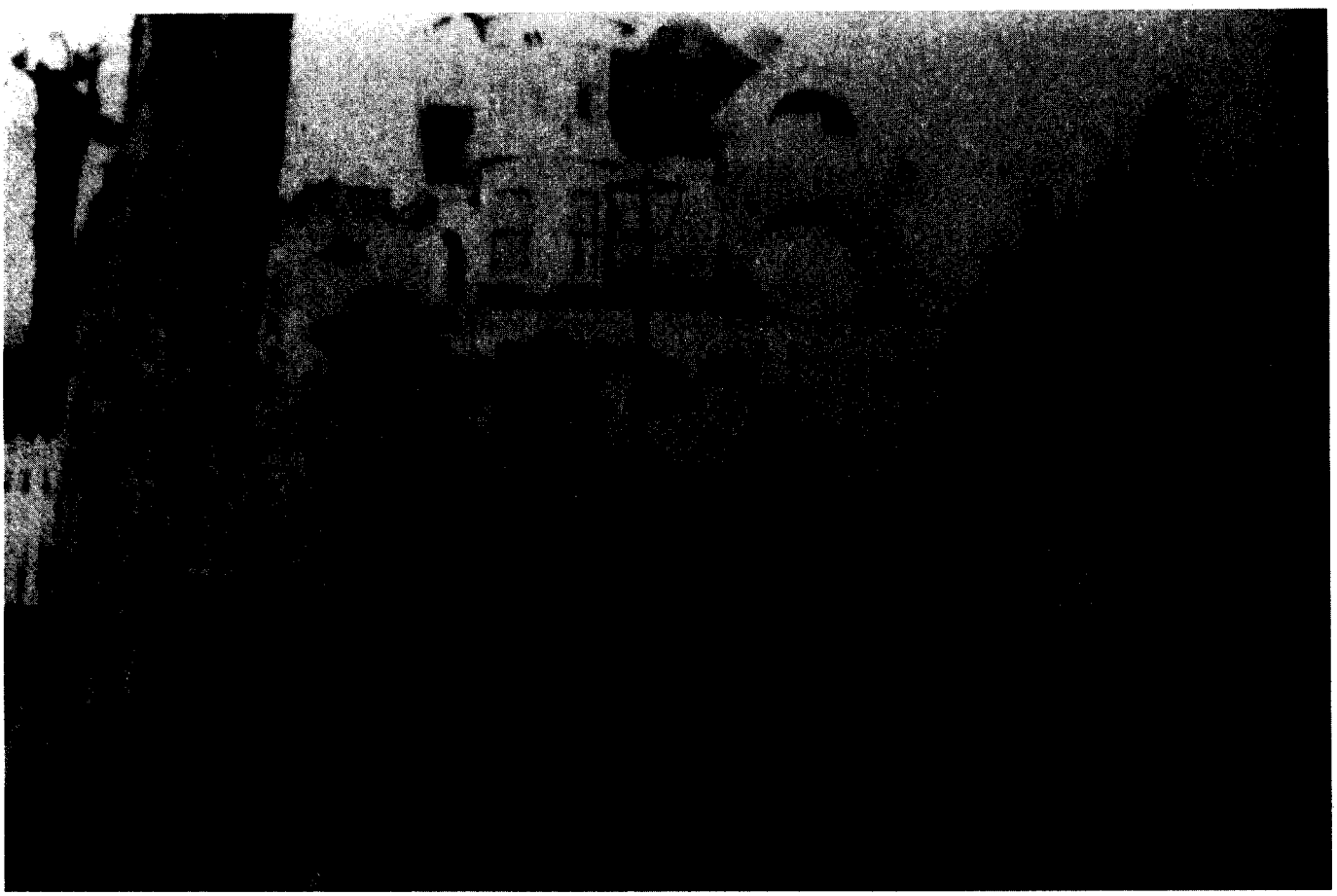

Courtesy Napa County Historical Society

Wall Kennedy on the job with a member of his chain gang in the foreground and several sidewalk superintendents at the corner of Napa's Coombs and Division streets, circa 1896–98.

"He is never harsh or cruel to his gang," the *Pioneer* commented, "and takes a hand with them in all the work assigned." A July 1900 Napa *Register* column added, "[Wall] took pride in the appearance of the streets of the city [and] he always took a lively interest in the welfare, spiritual as well as physical, of the prisoners.... [He] was their friend, confidante, and advisor. He was a firm believer in the efficiency of moral suasion and had no faith in the doctrine of moral depravity. He sought the good traits in every character and his confidence was seldom misplaced."

None of Wall's prisoners ever tried to escape and most of them called him by his nickname. Wall's habit of working in parity with his crew, however, caused some people to misidentify him as one of the convicts. One such anecdote tells of a woman who happened to walk by as the chain gang was repairing an old culvert in a very muddy place. She took special notice of "Old Desperate," chin deep in mud as he worked with the crew. A number of years passed and the same woman, who had been back east visiting friends, returned to Napa. Walking along one of the principal streets, she saw Kennedy toiling as before. "Well I declare!" she exclaimed sympathetically, "is that poor old man still on the chain gang?"

As Kennedy labored away bossing the crew, he recreated his not insignificantly adventurous life out west as he imagined it could have been. A 1918 *San Francisco Chronicle* quotes James Daly, then Napa county clerk, as remembering that "Kennedy used to squat half-sitting against the wall of the jail and talk; at the end he would rise and say, 'Upon my word, boys, if the biggest part of it ain't true.'"

Introducing the most famous of his episodic fantasies—how he rode herd on the first swarm of domesticated honeybees brought to the Pacific Coast from Missouri—Wall would look his listeners in the eye and declare with complete sincerity, "Some folks drove cattle across and I drove bees."

In the 1850s, according to Wall, he collected a large number of bees east of the Missouri River, then drove them gently from place to place, camping always where wildflowers were abundant. He allowed the bees to feed as long as they wanted. In a commanding voice he rallied them for the next leg of the journey. The bees soon grew to recognize Wall's voice, and he used a peculiar shrill whistle to call them. Wall always punctuated his tale by demonstrating the sound to his audiences. He had such control over his bees that he could round them up at a moment's notice with his peculiar rallying cry.

"Why, I used those bees to fight off the Indians!" he maintained.



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Once, when hostile tribesmen came racing into view, the bees swarmed all over him, enveloping Wall and his horse in such a clot of buzzing wings that the Indians could not distinguish the difference between the pile of bees and a mound of coarse sand or one of the ant hills dotting the plains. "I had them trained," Wall would continue, "the queen bee was my particular favorite. The first time the Indians completely surrounded us she realized the danger and after that she kept her pickets out. Without that queen and her pickets we would never have got through!" Whenever Indians were about the pickets would come humming in to warn Wall.

Another time warriors nearly caught Wall by surprise. "Here come the redskins—thousands and thousands of them, yelling and whooping like sin! Then the attack began to falter while Indian after Indian paused and started slapping their jaws. Becoming alarmed as the bees flew at their naked bodies and stung them, the Indians rode away for their dear lives, shouting and thrashing to get rid of the bees. I really enjoyed that. Presently the queen sounded the double quick and in twenty minutes there wasn't an Indian within four miles!"

One day Wall's friend C.B. Seeley was crossing Napa's Courthouse Square when he met the sheriff, who was laughing heartily. "He had been talking to Wall a moment before and, during the conversation, a bee had lighted on the jailer's shoulder," Seeley recounted. "'There's a bee on your shoulder,' the sheriff warned him. Wall straightened up and replied with perfect seriousness: 'Why that's my old queen bee—the one I drove across the plains. She's been looking for me for seventeen years and now she's found me. I'd know that old bee anywhere!'"

Wall's bee story first saw print in the Napa *Weekly Reporter* in 1886 and was widely circulated thereafter, next being published in the California magazine *The Grizzly Bear*, then going across the country where southern and eastern newspapers, including the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *New York Times*, carried the account. Foreign journalists picked up the tale, and it appeared in the *London Times*, a newspaper in Edinburgh, Scotland, and one in Paris, France. Sometimes the accounts credited Wall as the story's originator, sometimes not, but he always was delighted to hear that his yarn had traveled so far.

Although the bee story might be considered Wall's signature tale, his humorous concoctions about his California Mother Lode days were perhaps his most inventive. Longtime Napa gunsmith and hardware dealer Robert West recalled that at one time "we had a pretty big mudhole in Napa and it caused a little discussion on how to fill it. Wall Kennedy pretended to scorn that mudhole. 'Up in the Tuolumne mines,' he said, 'we had a mudhole about the size of that one—but so deep it simply couldn't be filled. We poured rocks, timbers, even gold dust into it—and it all went down! If you were crossing that mudhole and even thought too hard, you'd sink! If it was a sunny day and you crossed it, your shadow would sink! Don't talk mudholes to me, young fellow!'"

In 1920 the San Francisco *Examiner* gave a slightly different version of Wall's mudhole anecdote, identifying it as a muddy road near Hangtown. While walking down that road Wall's shadow sank one afternoon. "I was held there till the following noon when a'course there wasn't any shadow so I got away!" Wall claimed.

Up in one Tuolumne gold rush camp, a sheriff tried to install a prohibition regime, Wall reminisced. "He made a law that a man could get whiskey for only one purpose and that was to cure snake-bite. So I went out and caught me a couple of rattlers and I busted the camp peddling snake-bites for two bits apiece!"

Wall usually depicted himself on the side of law and order, but in one instance he admitted riding the owl hoot trail. While mining near Hangtown, he said, he had a partner with a strange illness. Ordinarily the partner was a peaceable man, but when his illness seized him only one thing would bring relief—he had to go out and kill a man. After a hard day's work, Kennedy's partner rose at midnight, feeling sick. There was just one remedy: he grabbed his revolver and disappeared. By dawn he had killed one of Hangtown's most popular citizens. He was quickly arrested and taken before the local judge.

"I JUST COULDN'T stand that!" Wall exclaimed. "I took my two guns, entered the courtroom, and, in a loud tone, demanded that my partner be released. The judge refused. I shot from each hand and immediately left, sure that I'd killed him. I lit out and didn't come back to Hangtown for several years, waiting for the excitement to die down. Finally I rode back one night and the first man I met was the judge! 'Excuse me—I thought Your Honor was dead!" I said, kind of surprised. The judge grasped me by the hand. 'Wall,' he told me, 'I owe you a great debt. All my life I was troubled by poor eyesight—I was pretty near blind—and a doctor said there was no cure for it except to pierce my ears and wear earrings. Well, I didn't like the notion. But two of your bullets went through the lobes of my ears exactly in the center. And now I bet my eyes are better than yours!'"

Proud of his service to the Union in the Civil War, Wall was an

*Up in one Tuolumne gold rush camp, a sheriff tried to install a prohibition regime, Wall reminisced. "He made a law that a man could get whiskey for only one purpose and that was to cure snake-bite. So I went out and caught me a couple of rattlers and I busted the camp peddling snake-bites for two bits apiece!"*



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active member of Napa's Kit Carson Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. At Vicksburg, Wall said, Grant was gravely depressed by the impasse and seemed ready to give up the fight. "Grant called the Army together to announce the retreat," Kennedy declared. "But when he was just ready to make the announcement with tears streaming down his face into his beard, the General saw a ray of hope. 'Is Wall Kennedy still with the Army?' he called out. 'Yes, General,' I answered, stepping out from the ranks. 'Well then, let the battle go on!' Grant cried, recovering his composure."

THE HEAD WOUND that Kennedy suffered at Vicksburg gradually blinded his left eye. Yet he blithely insisted that his right eye was "telescopic" and just as good as half a dozen ordinary eyes.

Like many pioneers Old Desperate had traveled widely, but his vehicles were not always conventional. He was once riding horseback through a Kansas cornfield, he averred, when a terrific cyclone came by, picked him up with the entire cornfield, and transported it eighty-four miles. His horse got used to it in a few minutes and began nipping at the cornstalks. "But I wouldn't advise traveling by cyclone," Wall discouraged his listeners. "You can't steer the damned things!"

When the first crude bicycles appeared in Napa in the mid-1880s—they were called "velocipedes" then—Wall was less than impressed. "They think those are new?" he sniffed. "Hell! I rode halfway across the plains from Missouri on one of those contraptions!"

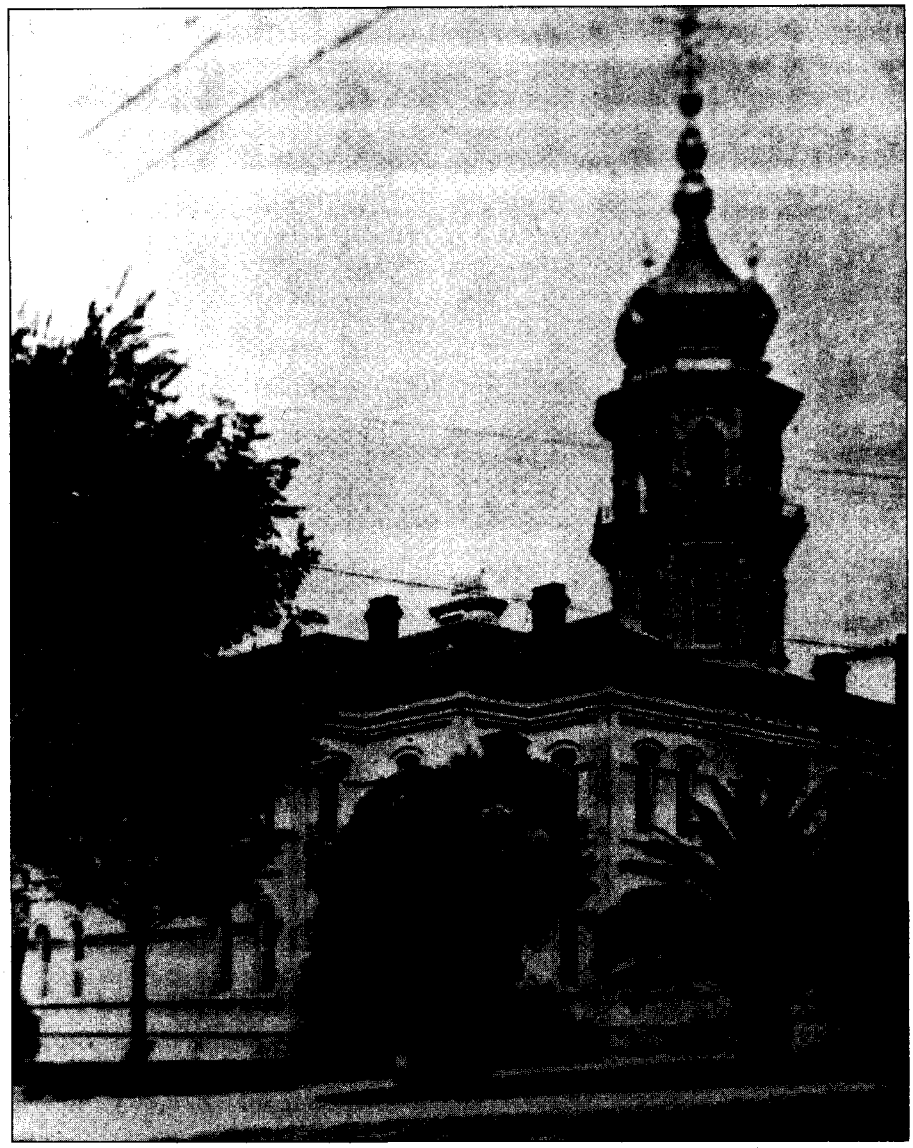
"How'd you make it?" asked Robert West.

"Make it?" Kennedy responded. "Why I made it out of two hoopsnakes!"

Wall was fond of seeing his tales repeated and never seemed to mind whether others credited him or embellished his stories. Nonetheless, in a rare show of umbrage, he took the Napa *Register* to task for a poem the paper had printed about him. In a letter to the editor published on page one of the June 29, 1888, *Register*, Wall said he had no objection to the whimsy of the poem but he took exception to the poor quality of the doggerel.

"Mr. Editor...There is a limit to human endurance," he wrote. "I have encountered many vicissitudes in my life. I've been shot and shot at, have been struck with bare knuckles, and I've been called names I will not here repeat. And I've lived through it all...but to be assailed in such execrable rhyme as I have been in the *Register* makes me unutterably weary. Now...I appeal for protection...I have always entertained a wish that my departure from this earth might be peaceable and tranquil, but to be halved, quartered, and hacked by verses not only dull but ragged...is a fate I would forego. If it may please the gods, let me die of old age and not be rhymed to death.'"

By contrast, actor-playwright Frank Bacon, a former Napa journalist, interpreted Wall's stories and personality credibly enough eventually to draw national acclaim. Born in Marysville, California, in January 1864, Bacon grew up in San Jose where his parents resettled. He arrived, newly married, in Napa in January 1886 and worked as a news writer-editor for the Napa *Weekly Reporter* as well as a self-employed photographer. But his real love was



Courtesy Napa County Historical Society

The old Napa County Courthouse at Napa in the early 1900s.



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the theater. While still in Napa he appeared in many amateur stage productions before going on to act professionally in the 1890s and early 1900s in San Francisco and other Pacific Coast venues.

While working as a journalist in Napa, Bacon spent many hours around the courthouse, entranced by the jailer's tall tales. After leaving town, Bacon co-authored a play with Winchell Smith entitled *Lightnin'*. Its protagonist was a heavily-tippling, talkative drifter and smalltime con man named Lightnin' Bill Jones. The comedy's plot revolved around Bill's trial in a fictional American small-town courtroom on vagrancy, public drunkenness, and swindling charges. Ultimately the slick-tongued wastrel succeeds in gaining acquittal by beguiling the judge, jury, and spectators with his clever wit and outrageously eccentric mannerisms.

Although Jones is a master yarn spinner and the entire play takes place in the courtroom, the plot itself had nothing to do with Wall Kennedy. Still, it was obvious to Wall's friends who later saw the play or heard about it that Bacon had relied at least partially on his memories of the jailer to create Lightnin' Bill. One of Bill's whoppers is Wall's tale of driving the first swarm of honey bees westward. Another is Wall's fantastic anecdote of taking an unexpected trip aboard a Kansas cyclone. Those who knew Wall also recognized many of his gestures and figures of speech in Bacon's portrayal of Jones.

Kennedy had been dead nearly eighteen years before Bacon finally succeeded in bringing *Lightnin'* to popular audiences. It premiered in Washington, DC, on January 25, 1918. President Woodrow Wilson attended the first performance and, according to Bacon's autobiography, *Barnstorming*, Wilson recited Wall's bee story to the world's leaders at the Versailles Conference in 1919 that officially ended World War I.

With Bacon in the lead role, *Lightnin'* was a triumph. It opened in New York City on August 25, 1918, running an unprecedented three years and one day at Broadway's Gaiety Theater. In late 1921 Bacon's troupe moved on to Chicago, where *Lightnin'* ran for almost another year. On November 19, 1922, while he was performing on stage in the Windy City, Bacon died of a massive cerebral hemorrhage at the age of fifty-eight.

That was not quite Lightnin' Bill's swan song. In 1925 Hollywood's Fox Studios turned the play into a silent movie directed by John Ford, with Jay Hunt as Bill Jones. In 1930 Fox updated *Lightnin'* to a "talkie" starring Will Rogers as Bill Jones and co-starring Joel McCrea, Sr.

Wall Kennedy's own last hurrah took place in September 1899, when many of his friends and associates decided to have Old Desperate recite some of his wild tales "in costume." They raided the sheriff's office, secured a number of revolvers and a huge Bowie knife. Studded with guns and holding the knife in his teeth, Wall stood against the side of the courthouse and enthusiastically acted out some of his whoppers about fighting Indians and outlaws. During the performance the wife of future Napa County Clerk James Daly happened by with her camera and snapped Wall's picture.

The photo found its way into newspapers outside the area. Over an article entitled "Cuba Libre," one leading journal identified it as a picture of General Maximo Gomez, commander of the recently-concluded Cuban Insurrection that helped precipitate the Spanish-American War.

While the good do not always die young, it is true that fate is blind and they do not always die easily. In the spring of 1900 Wall was diagnosed as suffering from cancer. He stayed on the job as long as he could, but in mid-May he conceded to the disease and retired to his Napa home on Stockton Street. During the final seven weeks of his life he told no more stories, rising from his delirium only to inquire several times about the state of the work he had pursued for so long.

At 3:15 A.M., July 6, 1900, Wall Kennedy died. Two days later he was buried in Tulocay Cemetery on the eastern outskirts of Napa. His second wife, four children, step-daughter, and six grandchildren survived him, along with a legacy of tall tales and congenial good humor.

Frank Bacon as Lightnin' Bill Jones in New York City, circa 1918–20.

Author's Photo



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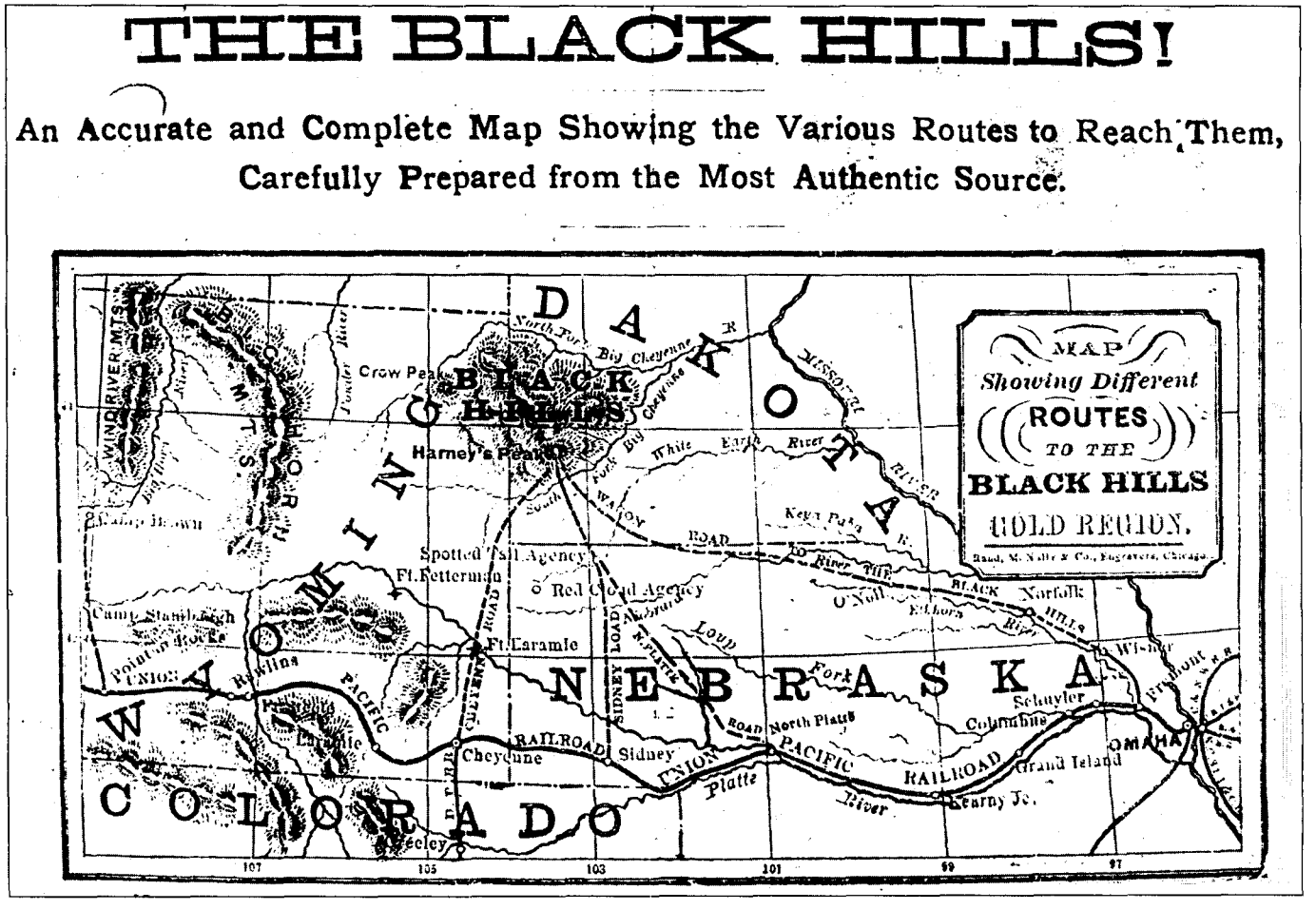
# Black Hills F

By CHARLES

The years immediately following the Civil War were a time of unbounded optimism and speculation, particularly in gold, railroads, and paper money. Although the terms "junk bond" and "leveraged buyout" were not yet coined, their concepts were developed during this period, when fortunes were made and lost on the simple shuffling of paper. But in 1873, the bubble burst. Businesses failed, unemployment rose to one of the highest levels in history, paper money lost value, and construction was suspended on the railroads linking east and west.

Desperate for new opportunities, people flocked west. Some became buffalo hunters on the Southern Plains. Others moved to the Midwest, hoping to reestablish themselves as farmers or ranchers on the empty land. And always there was the great draw of the Far West—gold.

Gold and silver were prime factors in settling the West. By 1873, strikes had populated California, Nevada, Colorado, and western Montana. If more of the precious metals could be found, it would boost a sagging economy, replenish




Copy in John Gregory Bourke Diary, U.S. Military Academy, West Point

An 1876 Rand McNally map shows the routes to the Black Hills goldfields. The Cheyenne route, while longest, was least arduous.



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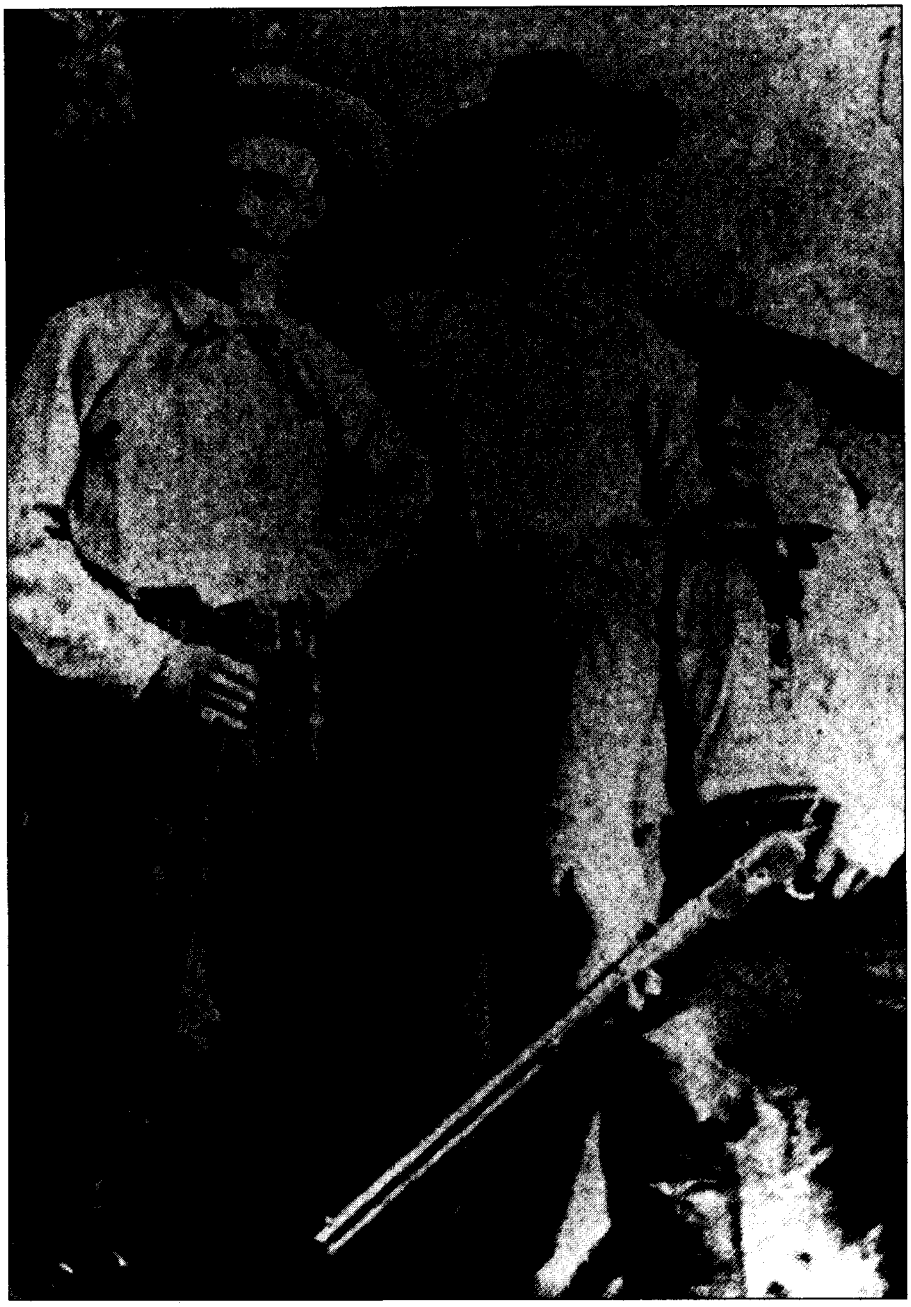
## ROBINSON III

the government's depleted reserves, and open new areas for settlement. People began talking about Dakota Territory's Black Hills.

"Black Hills" is a misnomer, for the "hills" are a rugged granite mountain range higher than the Appalachians. They include Harney Peak, highest point in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. Neither are the hills black—the name comes from the dark green needles of the young ponderosa pines, which make the mountains seem black from a distance. The range runs north and south in the extreme western part of South Dakota and extends slightly into Wyoming.

Under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the United States had recognized the Western Sioux Nation's sovereignty over the Black Hills. The range lay within the boundaries of the Great Sioux Reservation, and aside from persons specifically authorized by the treaty or permitted by the Indians to do so, no person would "ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory." That suited the Indians, who regarded the Black Hills as sacred.

Yet Indian legends spoke of gold in the hills. Although parties of prospectors had ventured there as early as the 1830s no one had ever made a major effort to exploit the region. The Black Hills were simply too remote, the Indians too dangerous, and other goldfields more accessible. By 1874, however, the economic depression was so deep that the United States could no longer ignore the Black Hills.



Author's Collection

Black Hills prospectors (from left) Charles Hayes, Doc Kinnie, and Robert McReynolds pose with weapons in a typical western studio photograph. Kinnie, a former medical student, passed himself off as a mining engineer in an excavating scheme that nearly killed his companions, but ultimately made them $3,000 each for two month's work.

According to prospector and frontiersman Robert McReynolds, the gold rush started when a party of Indians came into Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory, with gold dust which they said came from the Black Hills, "where the gulches abounded with the yellow stuff." Whether or not that was actually the case, businessmen in such places as Yankton and Sioux City began forming companies to send prospectors into the Black Hills, and small groups of prospectors went in on their own.

The possibility of a major gold deposit put the government and the army in a tight spot. On the one hand, the hills were permanent Indian territory under the Fort Laramie Treaty. On the other, the Black Hills were virtually unknown to anyone but the Indians, and the



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War Department considered some sort of scientific survey necessary. In June 1874, Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan ordered Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer to lead a reconnaissance into the hills. Officially, the expedition would determine possible sites for new military posts. Yet, in addition to engineers, topographers, and other specialists needed for purely military purposes, the entourage included J.A. Ross, also known as Horatio Nelson Ross in some accounts, and Charles McKay. There is no record of how they were selected for the expedition, but "antelope Fred" Snow who accompanied the expedition as a civilian horse wrangler, called them "two practical prospectors whom I had known for many years."

The reconnaissance into the Black Hills had the desired result. On August 2, 1874, near Harney Peak, Custer wrote his wife, "We have discovered a rich and beautiful country....We have discovered gold without a doubt, and probably other valuable metals." The prospectors had, indeed, found gold. With the failing economy, "Black Hills Fever" swept the country. Within weeks corporations were organizing at Yankton, Dakota Territory, and Sioux City, Iowa, to send mining expeditions to the hills.

THOSE EXPEDITIONS into the Black Hills, however, violated the Fort Laramie Treaty. The officer responsible for enforcing the treaty, General Sheridan, had no option but to stop them. He directed the area's military commanders, Brigadier Generals Alfred H. Terry in the Department of Dakota, and E.O.C. Ord in the Department of the Platte, to use force if necessary to keep miners out of the Black Hills, and thus out of the Great Sioux Reservation. The order appeared verbatim in the *Sioux City Daily Journal*, under the headlines: "General Sheridan Says You Just Keep Out of There. If You Don't, by Reading the Following You May Learn What Is Likely to Happen."

Sheridan was explicit about what was likely to happen. He told Terry and Ord "to burn the wagon trains, destroy the outfit and arrest the leaders, confining them at the nearest military post in the Indian country."

The generals faced a hopeless task. The army—reduced after the Civil War to little more than a national police force—was too poorly manned and equipped to evict the prospectors and miners who were already moving into the Black Hills. "Every part of it which is left unguarded will be invaded," Terry advised Sheridan.

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer led a military expedition into the Black Hills, confirming the existence of gold and creating the rush.

Sheridan, likewise, had no illusions. As always, when the specter of gold hovered over a failing economy, the rights of Indians would be displaced by the needs of the nation. He realized that it would be only a matter of time before Congress abolished the treaty and opened the country to settlement. In that case, he planned to "give cordial support to the settlement of the Black Hills."

As Sheridan anticipated, the government was having second thoughts about the Fort Laramie Treaty. In 1875, as the Black Hills gold rush boomed, President Grant advised army headquarters:

> All expeditions into the portion of the Indian Territory known as the Black Hills country must be prevented as long as the present treaty exists. Efforts are now being made to arrange for the extinguishment of the Indian title, and all proper means will be used to accomplish that end.
>
> If however the steps which are to be taken toward opening The Country to settlement fail, those persons at present within that territory, without authority, must be expelled.

Grant never doubted that the Black Hills would ultimately come under white rule. If simply arranging another treaty whereby the Indians would surrender the area failed, then the government would provoke a war, making sure that the Indians appeared to start it, and seize the hills by force. The excuse for armed confrontation appeared to be forthcoming. Already the Indians were retaliating for the invasion and had killed some prospectors. Against the day when the army would take the field, Brigadier General George Crook, a soldier with a proven record against the Indians of Arizona, was assigned



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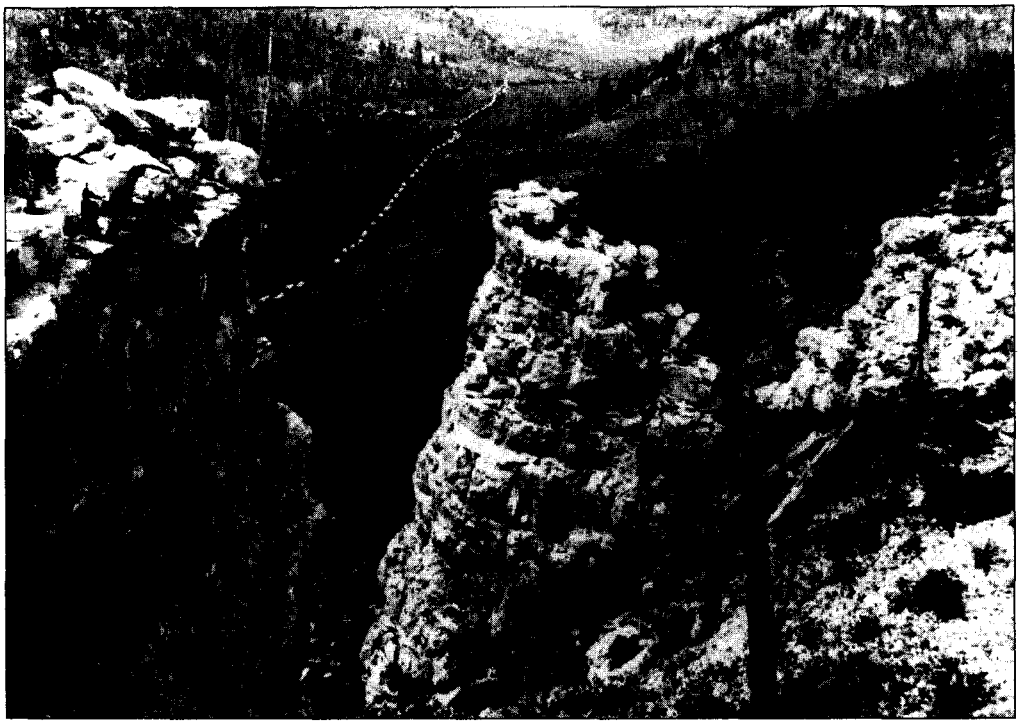
to replace General Ord in the Platte.

While the soldiers and politicians pondered the Indian situation, the miners and prospectors were busy. In the summer of 1875, a new government expedition found them already staking claims. No one attempted to stop them. The miners were too many, and they were too well armed for the troops accompanying the expedition. Assured they would not be molested, some miners near Harney Peak showed off gold to a *New York Herald* correspondent, who wrote, "They emphatically assured us that there was plenty of gold all along the stream and quartz lodes containing it in the hills."



Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Custer's train in the Black Hills.

Although the most direct route to the Black Hills from the East was through Nebraska to North Platte or Sidney and then north, it was also the most difficult, since it entailed crossing the North Platte River and traveling through the Badlands of South Dakota. Many preferred to continue west through Nebraska to Cheyenne, Wyoming, then turn northeast through Fort Laramie, where a newly constructed iron bridge crossed the North Platte and the terrain was gentler.

With the gold rush, Cheyenne bounded from railroad camp to boom town. Prospector Robert McReynolds called it "a typical frontier town. Gambling houses, saloons and dance halls were open continuously, night and day. Unlucky indeed was the tenderfoot who fell into their snare."

Cheyenne was full of tales of Black Hills gold. Lieutenant John Gregory Bourke, aide-de-camp to General Crook, wrote:

> No story was too wild, too absurd, to be swallowed with eagerness and published as fact in the papers of the town. Along the streets were camped long trains of wagons loading for the Black Hills; every store advertised a supply of goods suited to the Black Hills' trade; the hotels were crowded with men on their way to the new El Dorado; even the stage-drivers, bootblacks, and bell-boys could talk nothing but Black Hills—Black Hills....
>
> The road leading out of Cheyenne through Fort Laramie to the Black Hills was thronged with pedestrians and mounted men, with wagons and without all en route to the hills which their fancy pictured as stuffed with the precious metals. Not all were intent upon mining or other hard work: there was more than a fair contingent of gamblers and people of that kind.

Fort Laramie lay about ninety miles to the northeast. Some argonauts arrived at the post with well-provisioned wagon trains. Others came on foot, threadbare, begging their way from ranch to ranch, a testimony to the desperation back east.

The government, meanwhile, had failed to wrest the hills from the Indians. In December 1875, during an unusually severe winter that was heavy with snow, the politicians gave all of the Sioux and Cheyennes—including free-roaming, non-treaty bands—a January 31, 1876, deadline to report to the Indian agencies. Many of the bands had not even received the ultimatum by the time the deadline had passed. It made no difference. The Interior Department turned the matter over to the War Department

The ensuing conflict is known to history as the Great Sioux War and was one of the largest, most expensive Indian wars in United States history. The army tracked Indians through the snowy wastes of Wyoming, Montana, and the Dakotas, suffering defeat after defeat before finally wearing the tribes down. Meanwhile, settlers flooded into the hills, establishing towns such as Deadwood, Crook City, and Custer City.

But gold, not settlement, was the driving urge. Many of the towns sprang up along gold-rich Deadwood Gulch, where the ten-mile long road between Crook City and the town of Deadwood "was lined on both sides with deep ditches and sluice-boxes, excavated to develop or work the rich gravel lying along the entire gulch," according to Lieutenant Bourke.

Deadwood, McReynolds recalled, "was like all the frontier mining



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towns. Saloons, gambling houses and dance halls comprised the business of the place. The gulch was dotted with miner's cabins and dug-outs. There were a few stores, restaurants, and a bank...."

"Gambling halls flourished," Bourke wrote, "and all kinds of games were to be found—three card monte, keno, and poker." Nearby were the establishments he politely called "hurdy-gurdies," where he observed the padded and painted women were "too hideous" to ply their trade anywhere but on a frontier where women of any type were in short supply.

By local custom, which had the force of law in mining towns, a vein could be followed wherever it led, regardless of who owned the land above. Thus the local newspaper, the Deadwood *Pioneer,* and several other businesses were erected on stilts, since they had been virtually undermined. "Miners worked under them," Bourke noted, "and it looked as if it would be more economical to establish one's self in a balloon in the first place." Haphazard as it seemed, the system paid off; the Deadwood banks handled $100,000 a day.

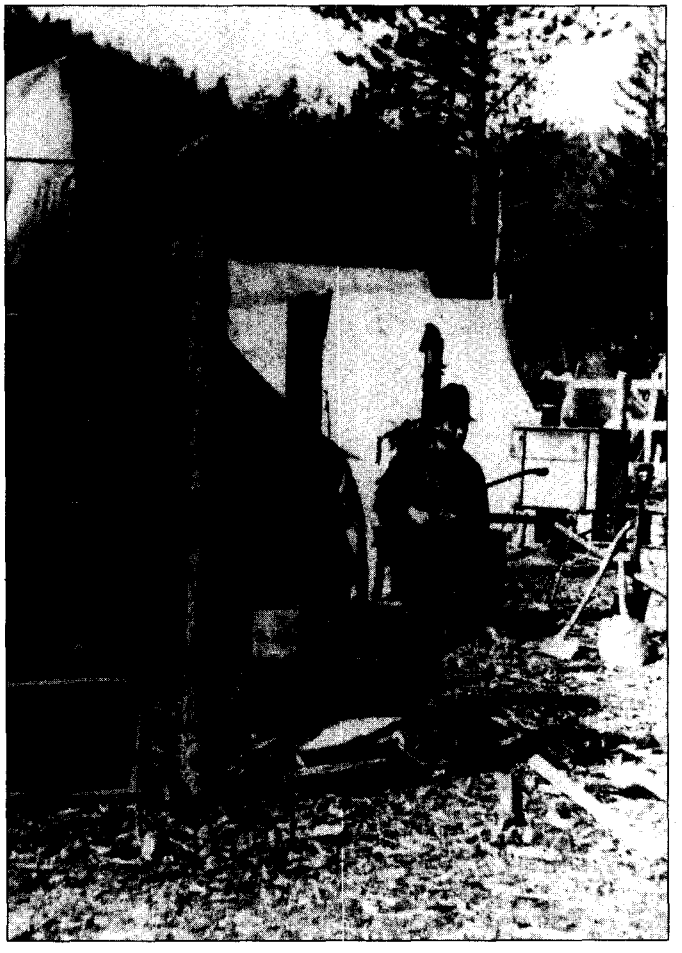
AWAY FROM town, Indians were a constant threat, and many of the newcomers were more than ready to fight. One party of Black Hills miners which had joined General Crook's troops for security distinguished itself in the Battle of the Rosebud. The miners provided covering fire as Crook's badly mauled soldiers regrouped.

McReynolds was with an expedition that Indians attacked between Cheyenne and Deadwood. At the first cry of "Indians! Indians!" the wagons formed a circle. The mules were unhitched and then taken to the center. The Indians galloped around the wagon circle, their bullets tearing through "like the angry hum of hornets about our heads." More rode down from the foothills beyond.

"There was a look of desperation upon the faces of our men, such as a pen can not describe," McReynolds wrote. "James Morgan, who was standing near me in the act of reloading his Winchester, suddenly fell nerveless to the ground. Our captain's voice rang out now and then, 'Be careful there, boys; take good aim before you fire.'"

After about an hour, the Indians retreated into the hills, leaving two of their own dead. Among the miners, Morgan was dead and two were wounded. McReynolds walked out to the Indian bodies. He wrote, "Night was coming on and with it all the horrors of uncertainty. I lingered about the spot for some time, with a dreadful fascination mingled with terror. Human life had perished there; human souls had gone into the uncertainty of an unknown beyond."

MORGAN'S BODY was carried into Deadwood, to become one of the first buried in the town's now-famous cemetery.



Over State Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota

A guard stands watch over a mining camp near Deadwood in 1876. Camps had to be defended not only from Indians, but from white outlaws as well.

McReynolds had little time to contemplate. He and his friends had come to the Black Hills to hunt gold. They found a horseshoe bend which could be drained for placer mining by tunneling. One of the group, a former medical student called Doc Kinnie, appointed himself the engineer and convinced the others to follow his plans.

"Day after day they dug and blasted rock, while Doc stood around looking wise and encouraging the work," McReynolds wrote. After a month, they had tunneled almost completely across the creek, and began demanding Kinnie recalculate.

"Never mind," he replied. "You are not through yet. I will let you know when to stop digging." When the others said they could hear water, Kinnie answered, "You fellows can't tell anything about it. Sounds of rushing water are always carried a long distance by rocks."

"But we are not in the rocks now, we are in a clay bank," one of the men countered.

"Clay does the same thing; keep digging."

Two days later, the water suddenly broke through, washing men and equipment out of the tunnel. Half-drowned, cold and mad, they looked for Kinnie, who had wisely



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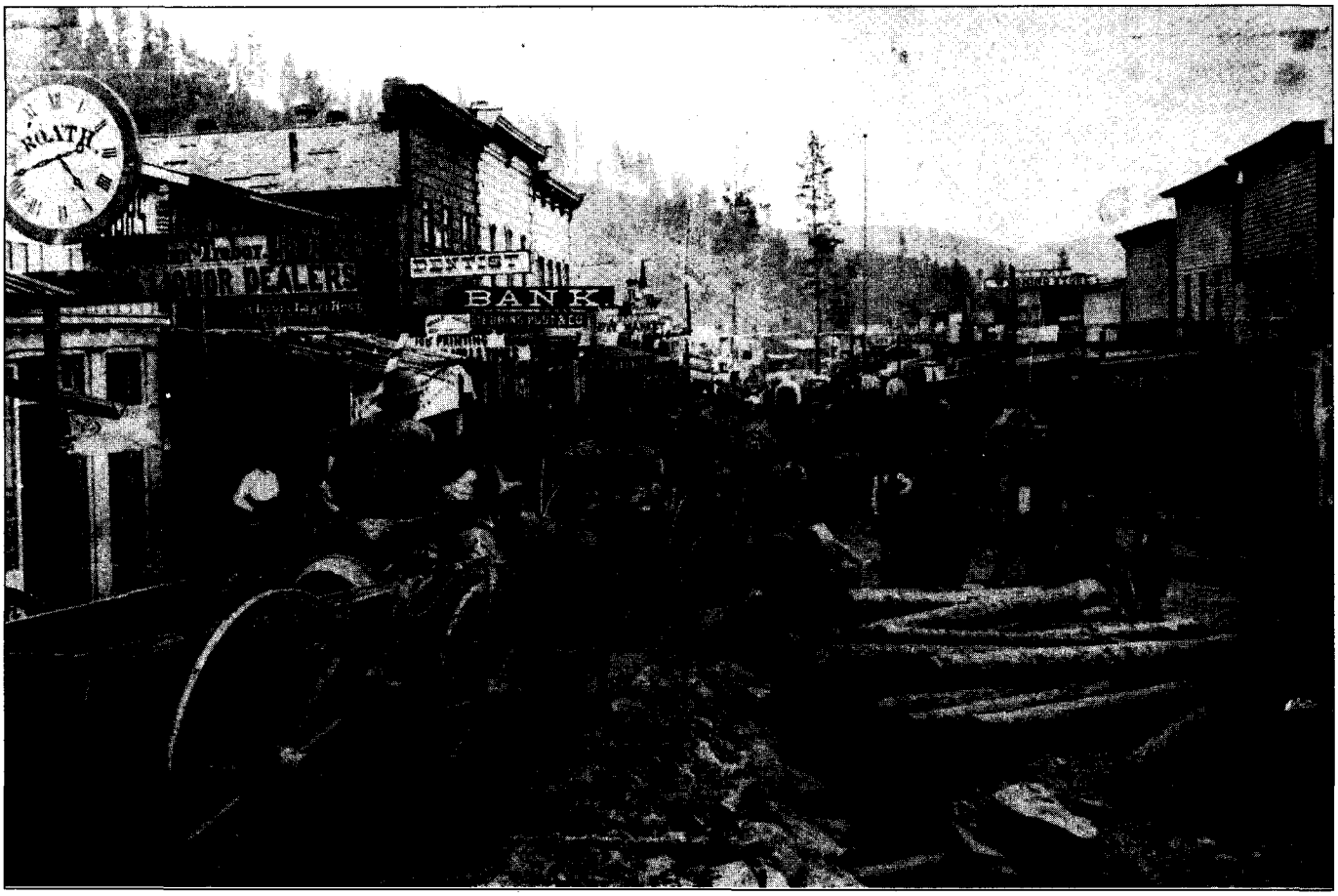


Nebraska State Historical Society

Traffic fills the streets of Deadwood, center of the Black Hills gold rush. Together with Fort Griffin, Texas; Dodge City, Kansas; and Tombstone, Arizona, Deadwood ranked among the four meanest towns in the West.

left the scene. After they dried their clothes and got something to eat, tempers cooled. Doc rejoined them and they returned to work.

"With pan and rocker, we now began to work the dry horseshoe bend," McReynolds wrote. "Nuggets weighing an ounce, and from that on down to the size of a pin head, were found."

In two months, the group took out over $6,000, then sold the claim to a placer mining company for $18,000. With the money divided evenly, each man received $3,000 but, within another two months it was all gone, lost in wildcat speculations on other mines—or so McReynolds claimed.

Soon, the easily worked ground was taken, and prospectors began looking for veins in the granite. Two brothers, Moses and Fred Manuel, who had mined in California, Nevada, and Idaho, investigated a site three miles south of Deadwood, where they found a promising vein of quartz. With no money for conventional rock crushing equipment, they rigged an arrastra, a water powered device which dragged flat slabs of rock over chunks of ore, crushing it so that the gold could be extracted by panning or amalgamating with mercury. Within a few months the Manuels' claim—the now-famous Homestake—had yielded $5,000, and they were able to acquire title to two other claims on the lead, the Old Abe and Golden Terra.

Inspired by the Manuels, other prospectors moved in and established the town of Lead, named for the quartz lead that yielded the gold. The Manuels, meanwhile, sold the Old Abe claim for $45,000, and Homestake and Golden Terra together for $105,000.

The Homestake-Golden Terra claims were purchased by a San Francisco consortium headed by George Hearst, whose entry into the arena signaled the decline of the gold rush. Using Homestake as a base, he gained control of scores of claims surrounding the site. By 1879 he was in complete control of the area. Establishing himself in Lead, he brought in crushing and pulverizing machinery, constructing a mill that could process 240 tons of ore and extract $2,000 worth of gold per day. Whereas the Manuels homemade arrastra did well to recover half the gold in the ore, Hearst's mills could remove as much as ninety percent in the early years and, by the turn of the century, could extract virtually all the gold.

Eventually, Homestake took more than $1 billion from the Black Hills, and giant mining corporations still work the area. But the Black Hills fever of the prospector was over, and the days of industrial mining had arrived.



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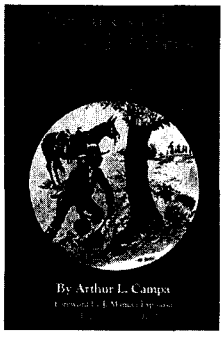


**516—TREASURE OF THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS: TALES AND TRADITIONS OF THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST.** *By Arthur L. Campa; foreword by J. Manuel Espinosa.* This collection includes stories of silver locked away in outlaw hoards, lost mines stacked with bars of gold, and fabulous Jesuit treasures buried when that order was expelled from New Spain. Not all of these folk treausres are of mineral wealth, however. There are also the legends of the Hermit of Las Vegas and of the lovelorn nun. University of Oklahoma Press.

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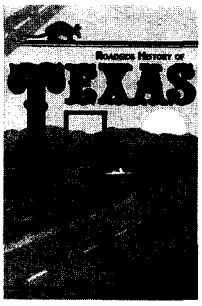
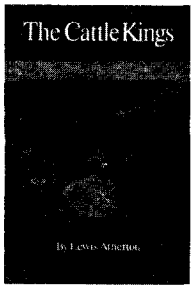



**525—ROADSIDE HISTORY OF TEXAS.** *By Leon C. Metz.* A well known Western writer, Metz takes the reader on an expertly guided historical tour of his home state, a history rich and immense. For the highway traveler, as well as the armchair voyager, this is an excellent reference and capsulated history. It offers many photos and illustrations and reliable, handy maps. 448p. Mountain Press Publishing.

**Paper, $16.00**

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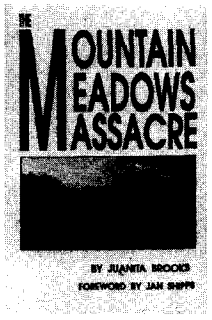


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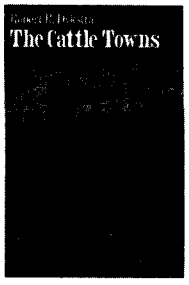


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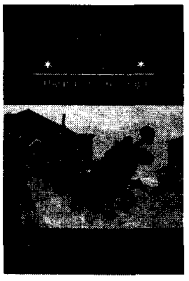

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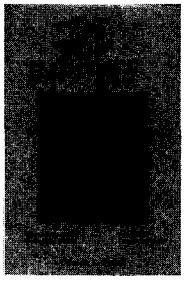

**465—THE BOY CAPTIVES: BEING THE TRUE STORY OF THE EXPERIENCES AND HARDSHIPS OF CLINTON L. SMITH AND JEFF D. SMITH.** *By Clinton L. Smith and J. Marvin Hunter.* Originally published in 1927 by Hunter, publisher of *Frontier Times*, this account records the story of two young men who claim to be the only known brothers to survive Indian captivity. Captives of Comanches and Apaches, the Smiths offer a look at Indian life and customs. Copies of the original book are rare. 219p. Anchor Publishing Company.

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**544—LOTTIE DENO: GAMBLING QUEEN OF HEARTS.** *By Cynthia Rose.* The beautiful woman gambler known on the Texas frontier as Lottie Deno has always been a figure of mystery. Controversy and conflicting stories about her origins and her life followed her wherever she went—and persist to this day. The true story is more fascinating than any work of fiction. Rose presents oral and written accounts by people who knew her well and includes many period photographs. 120p. Clear Light Publishers.

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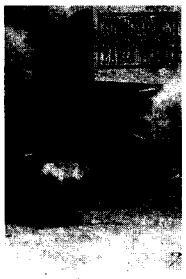

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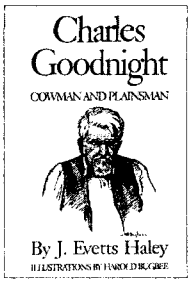


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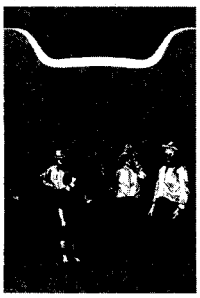

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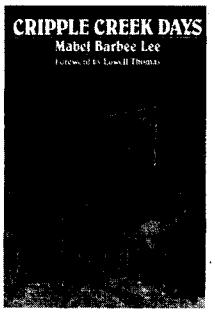


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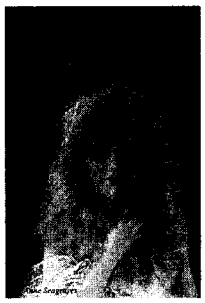

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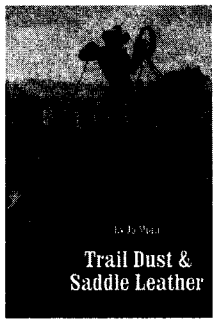


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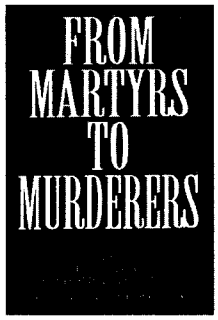


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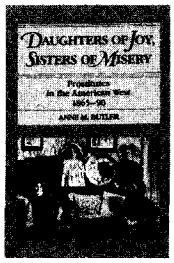


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One of two known photographs of Isom Dart. In this photo he posed as many young men of the late 1880s did, six-guns and all.

# SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN HIS ROPE

BY
JOE D. MEGEATH

He sat his horse taking in the broad, dry valley before him. He would have appeared as an insignificant speck set against the high rimrock cliffs of Irish Canyon as it opened to the rugged beauty of the 1880s Brown's Park, in northwestern Colorado. Thousand-foot cliffs towered above him on both sides. Eight hundred square miles of broken hills, gullies, cedar trees, and sagebrush pressed against him. He was a large man, over six feet tall, but out here he barely registered a notice.

Wise for his years, a freed slave taught by nature and man, he would not only survive but thrive in this land. Wandering for years after the Civil War, he had learned the wary life of the horse thief, cattle rustler, and outlaw. However, that was behind him now. His last attempt to steal horses was a terrifying ordeal from which he barely escaped with his life. He gave himself a new name—Isom Dart—and swore himself to a new life. Sage though he was to the ways of survival in this rugged landscape, not even Isom realized he would live the remaining quarter-century of his life here.

Much of what is known about Dart was chronicled by John Rolfe Burroughs in *Where the Old West Stayed Young.* Dart was born Ned, a slave in Arkansas. After the Civil War, he took the last name of Huddleston and joined the thousands of young men who looked westward to start their lives anew. He kept the name Ned Huddleston



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through a brash career of rodeo performing, horse stealing, and cattle rustling across Mexico and Texas and as far north as Wyoming.

Was Isom Dart a ruthless gunfighter and thief, or was he a beloved, well respected, laughing cowhand and horseman? Beside his well-known horse stealing and cattle rustling enterprises, Dart was no stranger to the inside of a jail, having been arrested for a number of "misunderstandings" in his lifetime. Consider, though, some of the events in his "reborn" life in northwestern Colorado.

The small ranchers of Brown's Park were constantly at odds with the area's few large cattle companies. For some time the big operators had brought charges of livestock theft against their smaller neighbors and their cowhands. No doubt at least a few of the charges were true, for only the greenest of newcomers to a makeshift cattle ranch would "eat his own beef." The competition for space, feed, and water boiled down to a battle for economic survival.

IN ONE SUCH instance, the magistrate in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, issued a warrant for Isom Dart's arrest. Sweetwater County bordered Colorado to the south, and cattle from that state often wandered across the boundary. The warrant was granted on behalf of Mr. Hoy, one of two large ranch owners in Brown's Park. Filing such a complaint required a two-day ride west to the nearest law at Hahn's Peak, Colorado, and more than likely frustrated Hoy. Lawmen who knew Brown's Park were less than anxious to serve warrants there, the distance being just one cause of their reluctance.

Once the warrant for Dart was issued, the Sweetwater County sheriff then had to find a way to serve the warrant and not lose face. The Sweetwater County seat, Rock Springs, Wyoming, had its own tough reputation, and the sheriff deputized one of Rock Springs' toughest, Joe Philbrick, to do the job.

Deputy Philbrick rented a buckboard and made the one-hundred-mile trip to Brown's Park. With few roads to accommodate the team and wagon, the excursion likely took two to three days. Deputy Philbrick successfully served the warrant on Dart, and they headed back to Rock Springs. On the way, the tired deputy tried to drive the team along too steep a hill. The buckboard's downhill wheels slid just far enough that the uphill wheels popped over a protruding boulder. The impact lifted the buckboard, and despite Philbrick's yells, upended the wagon.

The wagon dragged the team backward and threw Dart, who was riding on the uphill side, down the grade. Years of handling horses and breaking broncs had taught him how to land on hard ground. He rolled with the force and escaped with a few bruises and cuts. The deputy, sitting on the downhill side of the buckboard, did not get by so easily. The wagon's unforgiving frame rolled over him, breaking some ribs, bruising and mauling him badly.

Dart set about untangling the panicked team. Skillfully settling the horses, he rehitched them to the buckboard, which fortunately had settled upright, despite the rough terrain. Even for a man of his size and skill, upending an overturned wagon on this uneven ground would have been a daunting task. Dart then eased the unbroken buckboard back onto the faint trail and drove it to the top of the fateful hill. Loading his agonized captor in the buckboard, Dart drove on to Rock Springs. He delivered the deputy to the hospital, returned the team and buckboard to the livery stable, and then turned himself in to a surprised jailor.

The hospitalized deputy sheriff recovered the very day that Isom Dart was on trial. He got himself to the courtroom and testified for the defense. Whether the jury had already reached a verdict is unknown, but in typically western style they found Dart not guilty. He was free to return to Brown's Park.

Dart's good nature and skill not only permitted him to weave through the law unscathed but also enabled him to compete with other small cattle operators and cowboys. The late Jim Ramsay, one of the last of the old time cowboys and owner of the Acorn Ranch some thirty miles northwest of Brown's Park recounted another incident that illustrated Dart's skill with animals and people one day during a spring round up.

A bunch of ranchers and hired hands had ridden the rough draws in a pattern arranged by the roundup boss to find as many of the cows and unbranded calves as possible on the unfenced portion of the range. Many times the drovers had to ride two "circles." The days were long, often lasting from early dawn to late dusk.

Most of the ranchers, big and small, were either there or had cowhands there to represent them. That particular day the dust, the sun, and the endless bawling of cows and calves found the roundup crew ready for the midday dinner rest. The hungry men all were eager to eat and swap stories. But one person would have to hold the hundred or so head they had gathered for branding in the afternoon.

Among the cows and calves was an unbranded steer. According to the maverick law, a slick belonged to whoever found it and slapped his own brand on its hide. The roundup's many hands had not yet decided who would get the steer.

*Deputy Philbrick successfully served the warrant on Dart, and they headed back to Rock Springs. On the way, the tired deputy tried to drive the team along too steep a hill. The buckboard's downhill wheels slid just far enough that the uphill wheels popped over a protruding boulder. The impact lifted the buckboard, and despite Philbrick's yells, upended the wagon.*



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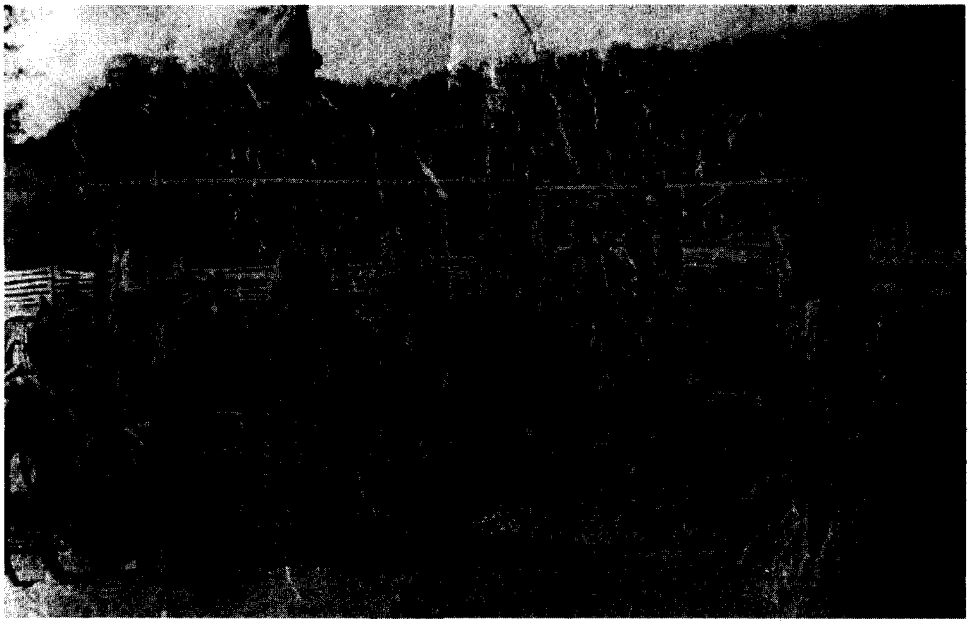
That probably would be the main topic at the midday meal and would involve a lot of palaver and friendly argument—and maybe not so friendly, depending on who got the idea that the steer belonged to him.



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The roundup crew at Brown's Park. Dart is mounted on a mule in the center.

IT WAS A RARE small rancher who had not spread his loop over a neighbor's unbranded animal to increase his own herd or to put food on a usually lean dinner table. Branding slicks was essential for a small operator to increase his herd. When the word spread through the roundup crew that it was time to stop while the sun was high, Dart spoke up, "I'll hold the herd while you all feed your self."

"That's a right generous offer," called back one of the hands, but there was a lot of scrutinizing the ground and casting uneasy glances. Each of the riders was wondering how they could prevent Dart from branding that slick steer while they ate.

One of the riders was along side Dart and his mule. The cowboy nudged his horse up a little closer to Dart's mount and quickly snatched Dart's lariat from his saddle. Brandishing the tightly coiled rope for all to see, he broke into that silly cowboy grin and the rest of the cowhands joined him. Without his rope old Isom had no way to brand that steer. With that the relieved cowpunchers rode off to shade up for dinner and left Dart to keep their morning's work from scattering.

Once the sun had come off its midday high the riders rode nonchalantly back to the gather. Some were still relating tall tales to anyone who would listen; some were picking their teeth with whittled twigs. No one recalls who first saw it, but there stood that slick steer, wearing Isom Dart's I D bar brand. Meanwhile, Dart was slowly circling the little herd acting like nothing in the world was out of the ordinary.

Dart had cut the slick from the herd and pushed him over the crest of a steep hill. Then, with a big whoop, he stampeded the steer down the hill. Dart on his mule was right behind. Top hand that he was, Dart knew that a mounted rider could pretty well outrun an animal on the downhill. Riding hell for leather, Dart leaned off the side of his saddle, got a hold of the steer's tail, took a little dally around his saddle horn, and spilled that big old steer. While the steer was still down and confused, Dart leapt off his mule and tied the steer up using a saddle string for a pigging rope. It was easy then to ride back up to the fire, get his branding iron, and run down to brand the steer.

There were lots of sullen, threatening glares when Dart started his story, but by the time he had finished the tale the glares were replaced with shakes of the head and some smiles. The men were rough, seasoned cowboys, but not many of them would even attempt such a scheme. Fewer yet thought they could pull it off, even if they had thought of it.

After grudging smiles broadened into good-hearted laughter, the men all knew they had little hope of ever matching the skills of Isom Dart. When the crew had quieted, Dart said simply, "Wouldn't of done it if you all hadn't taken my rope." The rough people and land of Brown's Park were not the right place for a "reformed sinner," however. Dart undoubtedly was involved in incidents of rustling and harassing the large ranchers.

By 1900 the battle between the area's small and large ranchers came to another murderous head. A man calling himself Tom Hicks came through Brown's Park to buy cattle or horses. Some folks remarked right off, "That man is no cowhand." In fact, they were right. Hicks was none other than Tom Horn. On October 3, 1900, Isom Dart's colorful life suddenly ended as a .30-30 slug cracked through the crisp fall morning air. The hidden bushwacker was Tom Horn, hired to "cure problems."

According to John Burroughs, local ranchers and neighbors, including Josephine McKnight, buried Dart on his homestead on the side of Cold Spring Mountain. The five men and boys with him that morning when the assassin's bullet cracked through the air never really recovered from their terror. Most of them found reasons to leave the country shortly thereafter. Three years later Tom Horn was convicted of murdering fourteen-year-old Willie Nickell and hanged in Cheyenne.



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# HIGH C
# ASSA

BY ROBER

All was quiet in Jerry Cunningham's Senate Saloon shortly after 1:00 A.M., Thursday, July 21, 1898, when three masked men entered through the back door. Cunningham and a local barfly named Daniel "Black Dan" Mills were up front, while a man named James Morrison slept in the rear of the structure. With little or no warning the intruders drew revolvers and began shooting.

Slugs plowed into Cunningham's right chest and left arm. Another hit Mills in the left arm. Apparently overlooking Morrison, the assassins exited through the front door as quickly as they had entered.

Cunningham died thirty minutes "after the shots were fired, without recovering consciousness." His Portland Avenue saloon in Goldfield, Colorado, population 1,500, was at the heart of the Cripple Creek mining district, one mile northeast of Victor. Recounting his life, the *Cripple Creek Morning Times* recalled that he had come to the Cripple Creek region from Aspen and had worked in the Exchange and Senate saloons at Victor before moving to Goldfield. The newspaper identified Mills as an out-of-work bartender, and Morrison as the day bartender.

Colorado Historical Society

Arthur L. Scott, alias "Pug" Ryan, led a gang of killers and thieves in Colorado's gold camps.

According to Morrison one of the masked gunmen cried out, "Hold up your hands." But before anyone could comply, the bullets found their marks. The killers made not the slightest attempt to search for money. The *Times* commented, "From Morrison's statement...the people of Goldfield are led to believe that the dastardly work was one of assassination, rather than robbery, though neither of the wounded men were known to have an enemy."

Before dawn, several posses of heavily armed men under the supervision of J.W. Cogswell were searching the nearby mountains for the killers, and surrounding camps were quickly notified of the murderous attack. Cripple Creek's lawmen were among the first to respond. They sent a posse to the area



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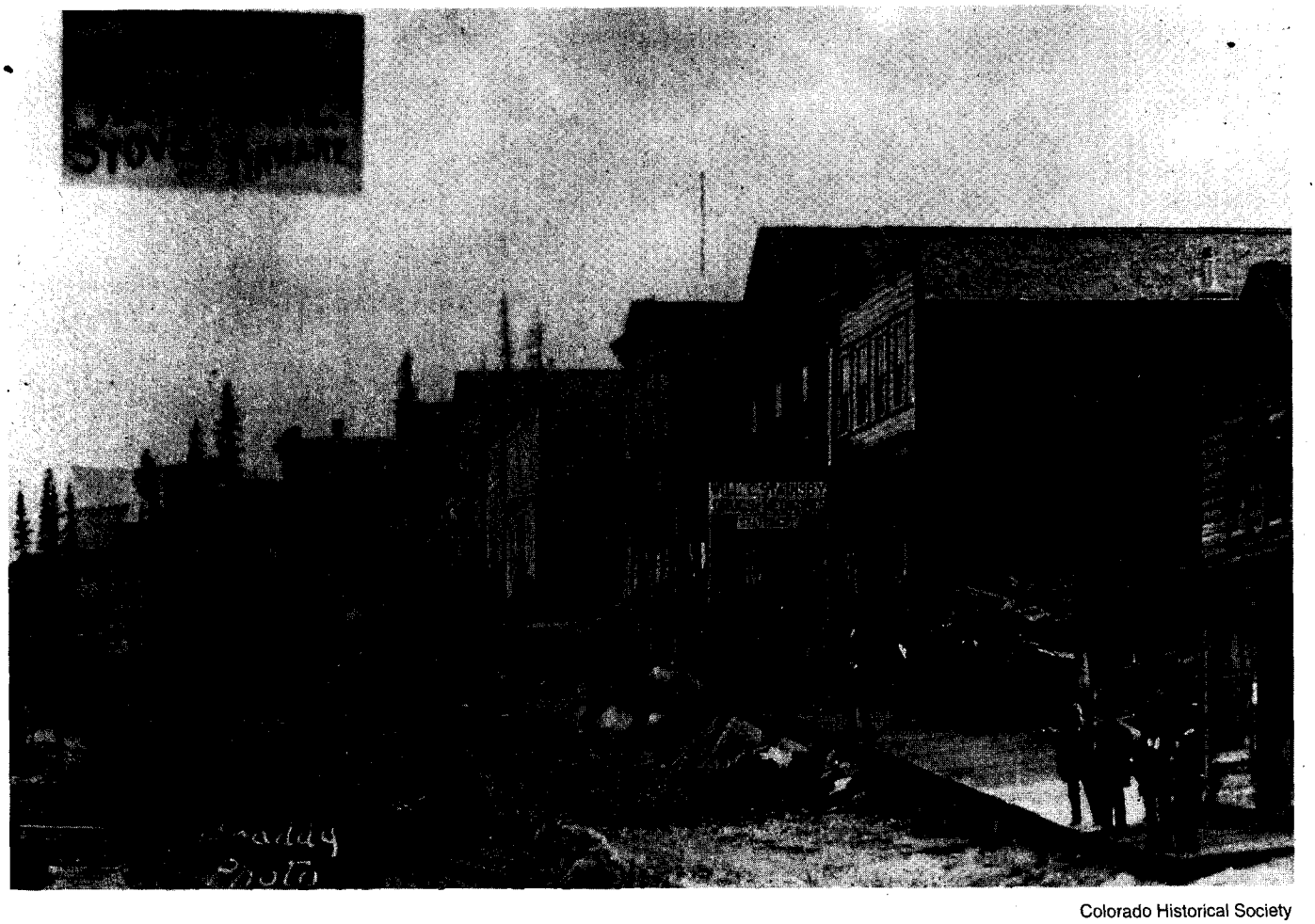
# DUNTRY SINSRY

HUNT, JR.



Colorado Historical Society

Breckenridge, Colorado, in the 1880s. The town's Denver Saloon would be the scene of a bungled hold up in 1898.

around Bull Hill, believing that it was the likely direction of escape. "The Cripple Creek officers were heavily armed, and prepared to meet the robbers on their own ground if they offered resistance of any kind."

More details about the shooting emerged at the inquest the next day. James Morrison testified that he was



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asleep when the trouble commenced. He heard a yell, quickly followed by three shots. He said he jumped out of bed and ran into the barroom. There he found the unconscious Cunningham bleeding heavily from a gunshot wound to the left torso. "Mills was lying on the floor near a table."

According to a story in the *Cripple Creek Morning Times,* Dr. Van Norman, the first physician summoned to the scene, said that "Cunningham was already dying and expired in an hour. Mills was taken to Pike's Peak hospital, where the bullet was removed from his arm."

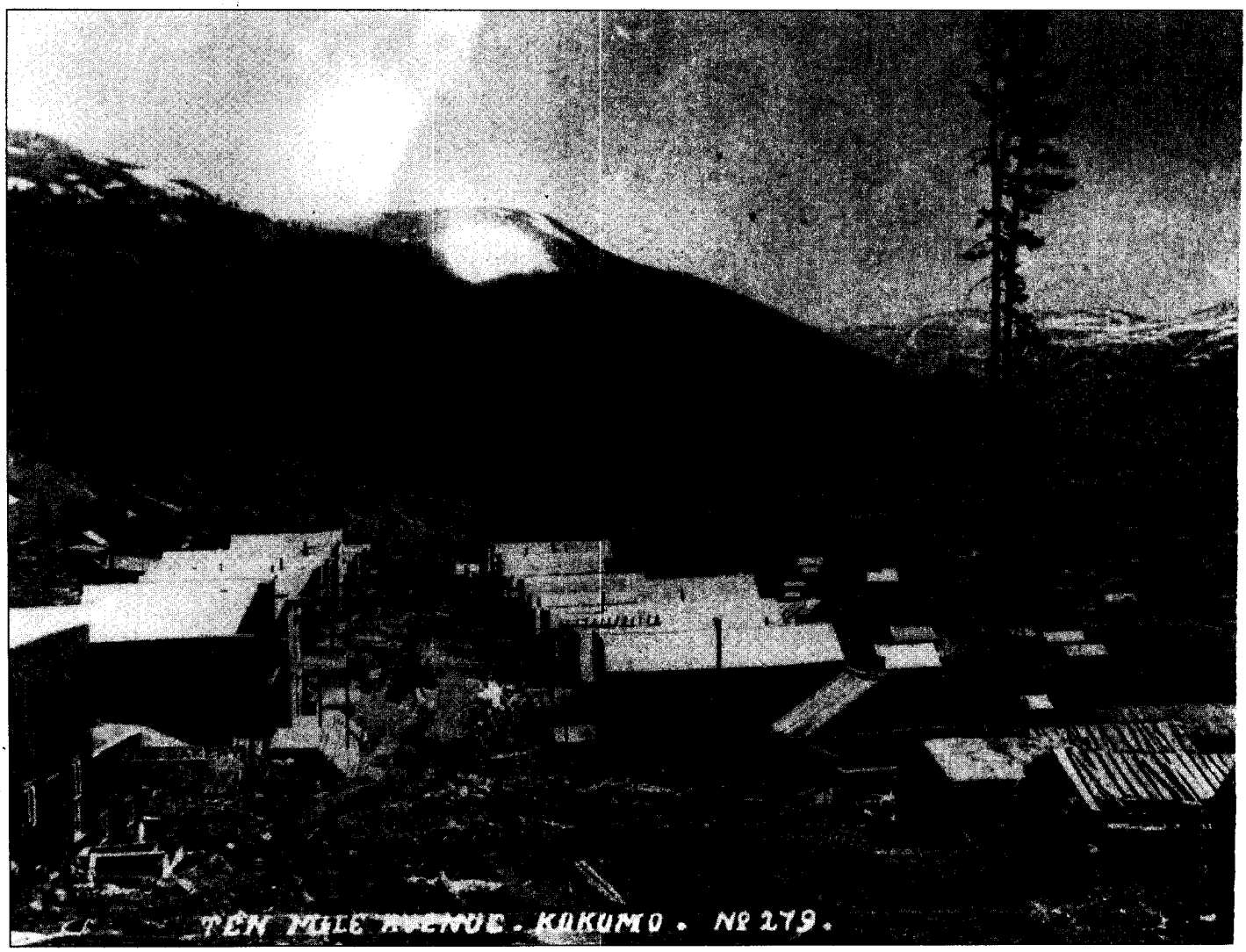
The inquest also revealed that four rather than three men were in the saloon. The *Morning Times* reported that a man named George Hubbard testified that he was talking with Jerry Cunningham when, he believed, the gunmen burst through the front door. He said he heard a shot and saw his friend fall. "He turned and saw a tall man in a suit and a short man in a sack coat all wearing black masks. The tall man shot Cunningham twice and he fell. The short man shot Mills, who fell behind the bar." Hubbard said he was six feet from Mills when he fell.

Hubbard added that the three masked men ran out the front door and took a left turn; he followed soon after and took a right turn. "He was frightened and did not stop to help the wounded men. He came back later, and assisted the officers in hunting for the murderers." In a strange turn of events during the inquest, Hubbard and Morrison quarreled; Morrison drew a gun and was promptly disarmed and arrested.

Meanwhile, "Black Dan" Mills was being treated for the bullet lodged in the muscle of his left arm. He was still strong enough to provide a *Times* reporter with several additional details about the attack. He was sitting by a table engrossed in a book, he said, when the bullets began to fly.

The *Morning Times* reported that according to Mills, Cunningham was standing in front of the bar with his back to a stove. The three intruders came in from the rear and began firing without a word. He was certain that "a short man shot him, and the tall fellow shot Jerry."

In an era when blood poisoning was often fatal, Mills succumbed to




Colorado Historical Society

Kokomo's Ten Mile Avenue.



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the toxins two days after he was shot. Evidently, the ball had forced a piece of cloth fabric into the wound. The *Times* reported, "Mills is an old man, and one who has absorbed a great deal of alcohol, and is not able to bear the shock of having an arm taken off at the shoulder."

Several weeks passed and the Goldfield murderers had seemingly vanished into the wilds of the Rockies. But three weeks later and one hundred miles to the northwest, another daring saloon raid took place. On the evening of August 11, four strangers entered the Denver saloon at Breckenridge, population 1,500, intent upon cleaning out the place. All four wore masks and carried a small armory of Winchester rifles, shotguns, and revolvers, for the purpose of "robbing the gambling games and going through the inmates."

As they passed into the main room, one of the shotgun wielders accidentally discharged his weapon. The blast hit the ceiling and got everyone's attention—quick. But it also spooked the robbers, who hastily went about their business. "While two members of the gang covered the crowd with their weapons, the other two went through the till of the faro bank, which was not in operation at the time, and through the pockets of the saloon's inmates." In their haste the bandits overlooked the safe and cash register, both containing large sums of money.

For their troubles, they secured fifty dollars in cash, a diamond shirt stud, and three gold watches. The frustrated marauders then vanished into the darkness.

R. W. Foote, proprietor of the Denver saloon, immediately offered a $100 reward for the robbers' arrest. Among those who jumped at the chance to earn a tidy sum was a former sheriff of Summit County and current member of the Rocky Mountain Detective Agency named M.E. Conrad. Conrad, also carrying a deputy sheriff's star, learned of the offer the next morning and promptly discovered that a party of suspicious characters was holed up in an abandoned miner's cabin near the 10,500-foot mining camp of Kokomo. About fifteen miles north of Leadville, with a population of 350, Kokomo was one of the highest camps in the Rockies.

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Pausing only to secure the assistance of a local saloon keeper named Sumner Whitney, Conrad at once sought the outlaws' trail. As the *Denver Republican* saw it, "Whitney, who has always borne the reputation of being a law-abiding, fearless man, at once volunteered his services in helping to capture the outlaws in the event that they were located." Conrad and Whitney arrived in Kokomo within hours and learned that four strangers "...were camped...near the cemetery, a mile from town."

According to the *Summit County Journal*, the cabin in question was known locally as "Robber's Roost." Going directly there, Conrad and Whitney burst in and found four men "lounging on bunks about the cabin." They were three strangers and "a fellow known as 'Broken Nose' Riley, a Kokomo loafer, who it seems was there for the purpose of rustling beer and grub for the hungry hyenas."

The strangers told Conrad and Whitney that they were prospectors. "This statement appeared credible to Conrad and Whitney, who arose and left the cabin, with the intention of returning to town." Once outside, however, Conrad had second thoughts. He convinced Whitney to return with him to the structure. Walking back inside, Conrad said, "Boys, we must see what you have got under those blankets."

Those words were Conrad's last. In a flash the three miners pulled out guns and blazed away. Conrad died instantly from a bullet through the skull, while "Whitney fell, his left thigh shattered, his left leg broken below the knee and a part of his ear shot away."

Despite the severity of his wounds, Whitney proved more than a match for the desperadoes. "One of the men, Dick Bryan, fell, mortally wounded, and died after writhing in agony for 30 minutes." Whitney also shot Dick Manley, who sustained at least one shot to the gut that perforated a kidney and ripped his intestines. Manley, adrenaline pumping, burst out of the shack and ran several hundred yards before collapsing.

While the lead flew, one of the outlaws, who turned out to be the notorious Arthur L. Scott, a.k.a. "Pug" Ryan, fired repeatedly as he escaped into the timber, close on Manley's heels. "When he reached Manley, who had fallen on the ground, he took the plunder procured in Breckenridge last night, with his six-shooter, and continued on over the mountains."

John Barrett, of Leadville, heard the shooting back in Kokomo, where he was awaiting the arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande train. Having seen Conrad and Whitney go in that direction, Barrett raised the alarm. Within minutes a group of thirty to fifty men "repaired" to the scene. They found Conrad dead, Whitney slumping by the cabin door, mortally wounded, and two strangers, one dead and one dying.

Whitney was transported to a hospital at Leadville, while the barely alive Dick Manley was taken to the Kokomo jail. The *Denver Republican* reported that in jail Manley confessed



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to starting out from Victor with Dick Bryan and "Pug" Ryan to rob saloons. At Breckenridge, the trio met a tall, slim, light-complexioned man, who convinced them to rob the Denver saloon. Answering to the name of Lewis, he was a self-styled professional, having robbed a local establishment several weeks earlier.

After the Breckenridge holdup, the four bandits "walked all night" until they reached the abandoned shack. According to Manley's version of the shootout, "Dick Bryan and Ryan jumped up and pulled their guns and the officer that's dead was shot. They began shooting and in the excitement and smoke I could not see who shot the other man, but I think the man that's dead [Bryan] did the first shooting."

Manley said his finger was shot off as he ran away from the scene. The fourth bandit, Fred Lewis or Fred Wilson, had left before the officers arrived, saying he was going to Glenwood Springs, as they were too conspicuous, traveling as a foursome. He intended to rendezvous with them the following night at Leadville, where they planned to rob the famous Pioneer Saloon on State Street.

With dispatch, the remains of Officer Conrad were returned to Breckenridge for burial. Bryan's body was placed in a cell in the Kokomo jail. Dick Manley was also taken to the Kokomo jail, where he attracted a large crowd of irate men who threatened to lynch him at the first opportunity.

"Broken Nose" Riley (or Reilly) was also housed in the Kokomo jail, although no evidence indicated he was a gang member. A force of twenty-five special deputies was hastily assembled to guard the jail, as the *Denver Republican* reported, "Force had to be used to prevent prominent citizens from killing Manley and Reilly, the feeling is so bitter.

The *Republican* quoted Manley, who drifted in and out of consciousness, to the effect "that a part of his gang is the same that held up saloons at Victor, and Cripple Creek and Goldfield recently." Lawmen in those camps and in Breckenridge believed they were also the ones who "held up Joe Bryant and robbed Mrs. George Stevens here on July 30."

Sumner Whitney, convalescing at Leadville, was strong enough to relate his version of the shootout. He did not know how many shots were fired, but he knew that the affray was over in a matter of seconds. He also knew that the outlaws fired at least three bullets in his direction. One bullet passed through his left ear, and one each went through his right thigh and right hip. Like Dan Mills, he was fated to survive the initial trauma, only to succumb to blood poisoning.

News of the Kokomo shootout soon reached Cripple Creek, the old stamping ground of Ryan, Manley, and Bryan. The *Rocky Mountain News* wrote, "There is little question that the same trio held up the...saloon at Goldfield the 11th of last month and killed Jerry Cunningham and Dan Mills. All three resided at Victor the greater part of the time, but operated all over the camp."

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Dick Bryan, a prime suspect in the Palace Hotel bar holdup at Cripple Creek on April 21, was a well-known tough whose real name was Richard Lorraine. He had earlier served a two-year term in the state penitentiary, convicted of burglary from Mesa County. "Pug" Ryan, who assumed leadership of the gang, had served two and a half years in prison for an 1895 conviction of highway robbery from Lake County. Ryan was twenty-eight-years old at the time, and a native of Dewitt, Missouri. Dick Manley, a cowboy by occupation, had been convicted of murder in Huerfano County at the age of sixteen. He was twenty-three years old in 1898.

Before he died, Dick Manley allegedly confirmed that Ryan and Bryan were two of the three men responsible for the Goldfield murders. In an obituary, the *News* identified Manley as "a typical Western tough and gun-fighter," having killed several men and served seven years in Canon City for murder. In 1891, the *News* reported that this "desperado of the Jesse James type," together with a man named Peter Foley, killed a man at Walsenburg, Colorado.

After his parole in 1897, Manley went to New Mexico and continued his wicked ways, where according to the *News*, "He frequented the gambling resorts of the Red River country and managed to make a good deal of money dealing faro." According to the *News*, while in New Mexico, Manley killed a man named Bill Cunningham, and was also suspected in the murder of a Silver City rancher.

Breckenric

Meanwhile the wives of Dick Bryan and Dick Manley, both living at Victor, learned of the Kokomo shootout and their husbands' violent deaths. The *Times* reported that Mrs. Manley picked up a newspaper and began screaming, "My God, my dear husband is killed." Mrs. Bryan seized the newspaper and after reading the article, said calmly, "Yes, and they've killed Dick, too." Another article went on to say, "The women state that their husbands left Victor last Monday. The police say that they were accompanied by Pug Ryan."

Two days after the Kokomo tragedy, four of the combatants were dead. Dick Manley died on August 13, Sumner Whitney on August 14. The day after Sumner Whitney died, Dick Manley was buried at Kokomo, several hundred feet from the infamous cabin.



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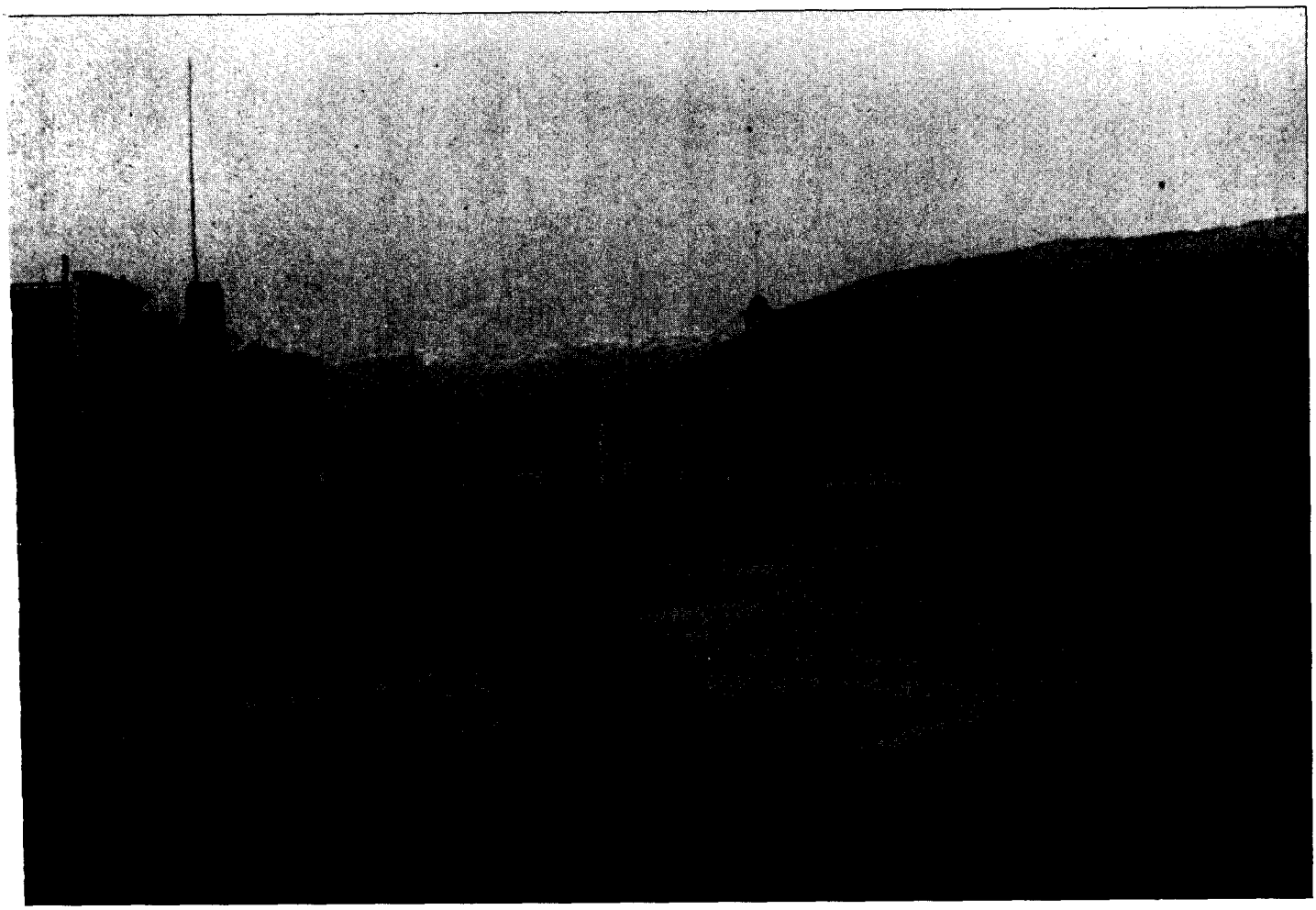

Colorado Historical Society

›rado, in the 1880s. The town's Denver saloon would be the scene of a bungled hold up in 1898.

About the same time, Denver police detective Ed Carberry told a *News* reporter that he knew "Pug" Ryan very well: "He lived in Cripple Creek and Victor while I was there, and he was nothing but a tin horn gambler. He was the kind that would follow a winner out of the gambling house and hold him up for his bank roll. Ryan belonged to the 'Brocky Fitz' gang of holdups. Ryan and Billy Taylor, who was known as 'Johnny Behind the Back,' went into a saloon at Victor and stuck up thirty men."

Ryan was nowhere to be found, although at least three posses from Summit County were on his trail—a trail, it would turn out, that turned cold for nearly three years.

Officers finally captured Ryan at Seattle, Washington, in May 1902. By then the rewards for his arrest totaled $2,000. Extradited to Leadville, he was charged with first degree murder in the deaths of Conrad and Whitney. But no sooner was he jailed than he led four other prisoners in an escape on June 1, 1902. Breckenridge citizens were particularly incensed at the getaway. They were convinced that Ryan's lawyer had schemed to have the trial moved from Breckenridge to Leadville.

Ryan's freedom was short. After walking and riding the rails to Cripple Creek, on June 7 he brazenly walked the gold camp's streets until a local lawman recognized and rearrested him.

Tried in Breckenridge after all, he was found guilty of first degree murder. The *Denver Post* reported that when the verdict was read, "Ryan's face blanched and a look of hate and defiance came into his eyes." The paper also noted that while the spectators were well-behaved, it could have been a different story if Ryan had been acquitted; in that event, a lynching was a strong possibility.

Part of the loot stolen by "Pug" Ryan and his gang was found near Kokomo in 1908. According to the *Denver Times,* the cache was found near the summit of Jaque Mountain by the children of a man named John Carson. The children were playing when they spotted a bird's nest in an old, rotted tree. Reaching in they pulled out two gold watches and a diamond stud. Two of the men victimized at the Denver saloon in 1898, came forward and identified the items.

Ryan received a life sentence for his crimes; a sentence that he completed when he died in the prison hospital in June 1931. He was sixty-one years old. So ended a gang of assassins who terrorized Colorado mining camps in the waning years of the Old West.



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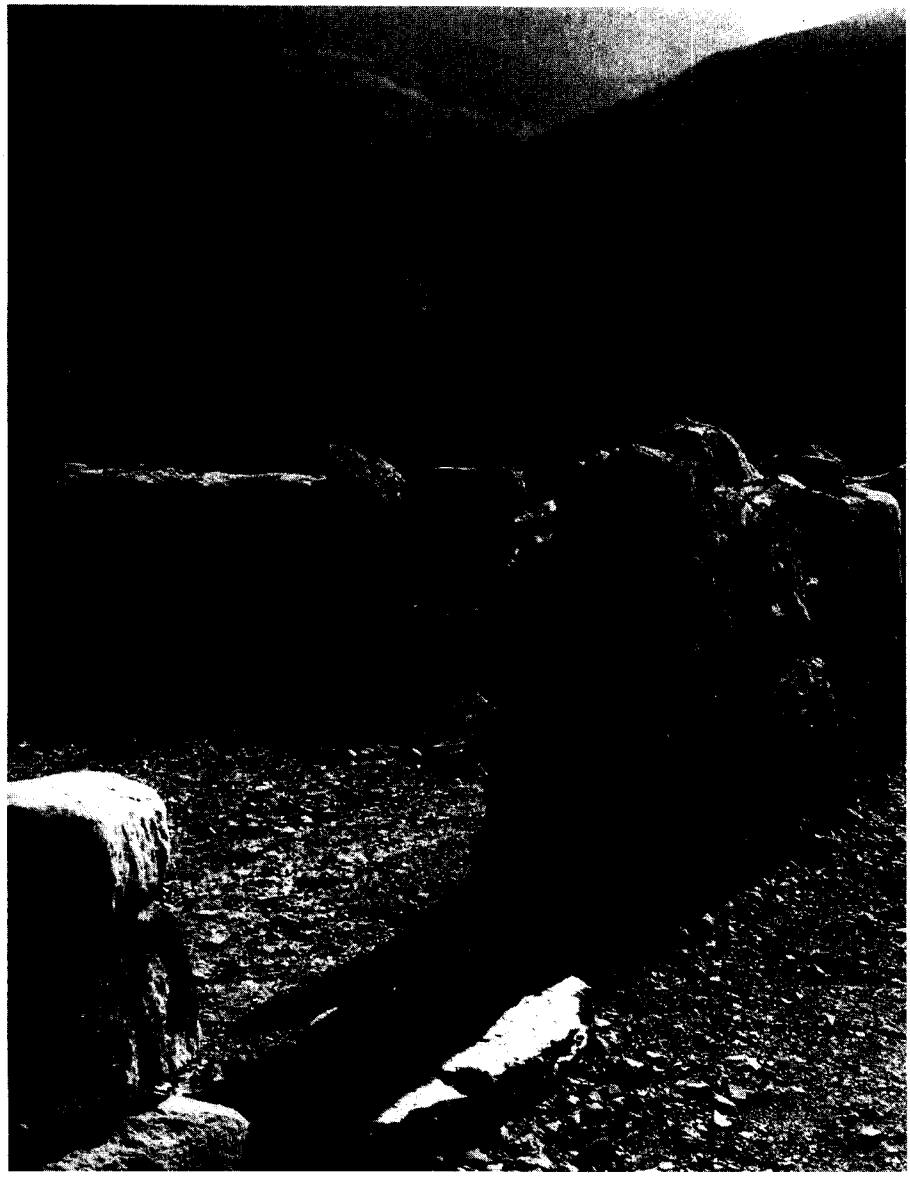
# WHO KILLED FRE

## By ROBERT ROWLEY

On December 28, 1894, a cowboy called Dan Fitchett rode into La Luz, New Mexico, and told Justice of the Peace Faustino Acuña that somebody had shot Frank "Frenchy" Rochas dead at his cabin in Dog Canyon. Acuña and a group of men made the twenty-five-mile ride south, along the rugged western escarpment of the Sacramento Mountains, to investigate. They found the Frenchman, Francois Jean Rochas, dead of a gunshot wound to the chest. A quick survey of the possessions in his crude, rock cabin revealed nothing worth dying for: woodworking tools, dry goods, a set of books in French. Based on the evidence, Acuña and a coroner's jury subsequently ruled out foul play. But make no mistake about it—Francois Jean "Frenchy" Rochas was no suicide.



Author's Photo

The ruins of Frenchy's rock cabin in Dog Canyon, New Mexico.

The solitary foreigner's death still intrigues people visiting the ruins of his rock cabin on the grounds of southern New Mexico's Oliver Lee Memorial State Park. Was he murdered simply because he was an ill-tempered old man, or because he had something others wanted badly enough to kill for? Since no real murder investigation ever took place, the events surrounding Rochas' death will always remain a mystery. But to some local residents of the Tularosa Basin, the Frenchman's fate is a constant reminder of how the Old West was really won.

Nobody knows for sure why Rochas left his native France in the early 1880s to emigrate to the United States. Born on September 22, 1843, he was over forty years old when he arrived in North America. Some have speculated that he fled his hometown of Vif because of a broken heart. Others have claimed that the infestation of the vine pest forced him off his land in search of another life. Most probably, he left France because he was something of a pioneer. He left for health reasons, too. In an 1894 letter to a friend in Santa Fe, Rochas complained of still suffering from a "miserable catarrh in the head and also in the stomach." Whatever his reasons, Rochas made an arduous journey across the Atlantic to the United



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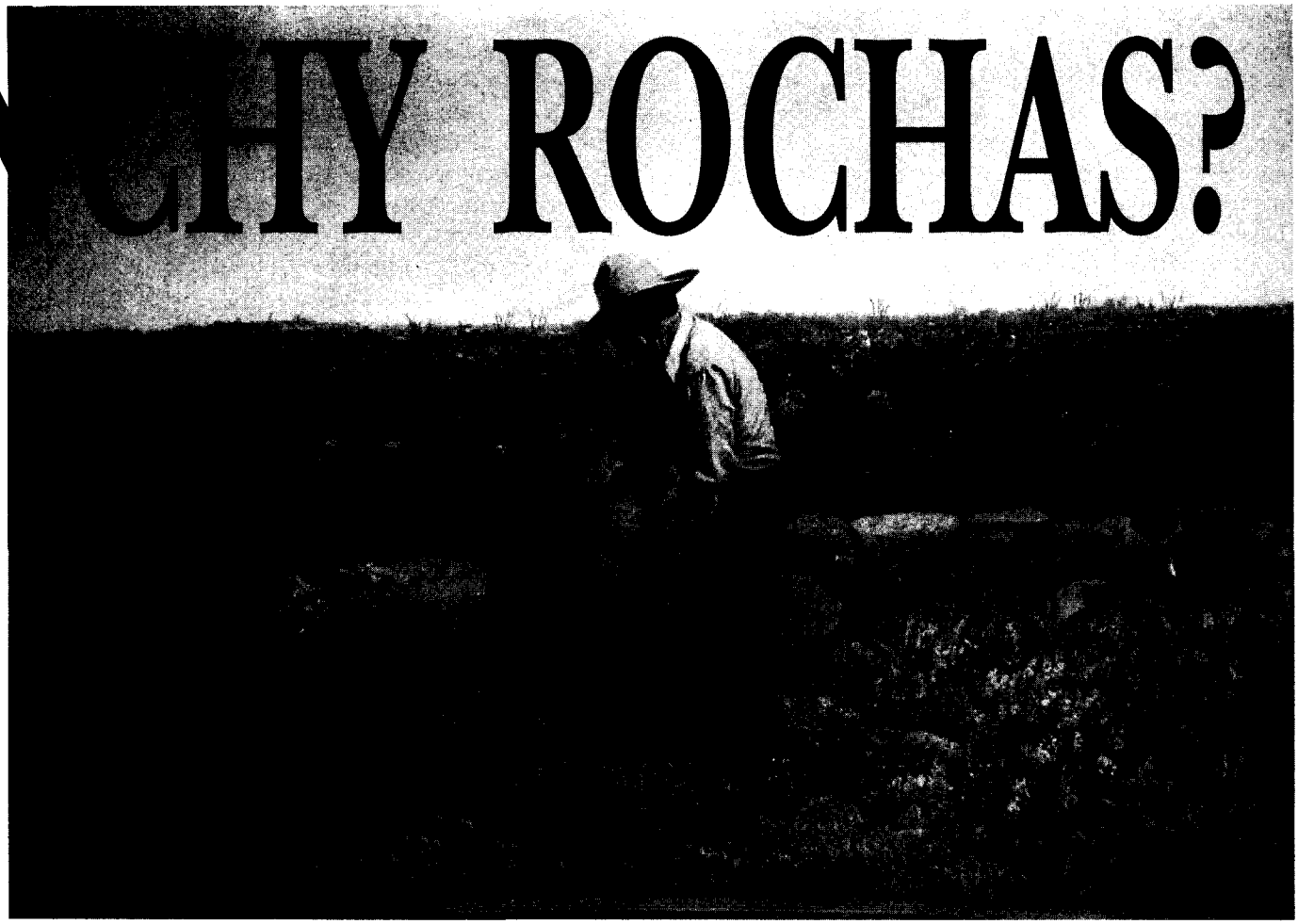
# WHY ROCHAS?



Author's Photo

A mural painted by Dorsey Bonnell at the Oliver Lee Memorial State Park depicts Frenchy Rochas building a rock wall to corral his cattle.

States, then crossed two-thirds of this country to find his place in the history of the American Southwest.

In the mid-eighties, Rochas squatted on a piece of land at the mouth of Dog Canyon, New Mexico Territory. He could not have found a harsher place to live. In *Tularosa: Last of the Frontier West*, C.L. Sonnichsen says of that territory, "In all the sun-scorched and sand-blasted reaches of the Southwest there is no grimmer region. Only the fierce and the rugged can live here—prickly pear and mesquite; rattlesnake and tarantula." But Dog Canyon was, and still is, an especially beautiful oasis in the desert. A cool, clear stream runs year-round out of the mountain high country, cascading down through the boulder-strewn canyon to the desert floor.

Life must have been hard for Rochas at Dog Canyon, but rewarding. Not an especially gregarious man, he valued his solitude, and there was plenty to be had in that remote desert location. His nearest acquaintances lived sixty-five miles away in Las Cruces. Other newcomers would eventually settle nearby, but Rochas was almost always unfriendly to the latter-day arrivals, accusing them of trespassing and of cattle rustling. Still, in the early years he must have been quite content with his life, using the canyon water to irrigate a small garden and an orchard of fruit trees he had planted.

It was not unusual for Rochas to go months without making human contact, his only companions a horse and several dogs. But then, running low on supplies, he would hitch the horse to his wagon and set off southwesterly across the Tularosa Basin, past the White Sands, through the Chalk Hills, over San Augustin Pass in the rugged Organ Mountains, and down the long slope to Las Cruces. Since Rochas' shopping trips were few and far between, he would load his wagon with as much merchandise as he could carry from Theodore Rouault's general store.

Townspeople recognized Rochas, the stocky Frenchman with the sun-reddened face. They called him "Frenchy," though he preferred the name "Frank." Few citizens had anything to do with him, since he was a foreigner in their native land, and not a very pleasant one at that. He was rough and ill-tempered, downright anti-social. A good many of the townsfolk thought he was crazy living out there in the desert all by himself, risking his scalp (since the "Indian problem" still existed in some places), and relying on his skill with a Winchester rifle to defend himself from the Texas cattlemen



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who had just begun to filter into the country.

But Rochas was a rugged old snake, not afraid of anything or any man, and he would just as soon live alone in that treacherous desert as in the company of others. He must have loved the solitude of his desert home. Multi-hued cliffs towered behind his one-room stone cabin. Farther up the canyon the pine-clad heights were visible, and giant cumulus clouds billowed above the Sacramento Mountains.

At some point Rochas decided that he, too, would become a cattleman, and he began raising a small herd. In order to keep his cows fenced in, he started building massive rock walls at the mouth of the canyon. With some of the rocks weighing as much as a quarter ton, he clearly had help with the construction. Sacrificing his privacy for the sake of his herd, he hired cowboy transients to help with odd jobs around the homestead. Rochas worried constantly that his workers were robbing him. He had by now increased his property holdings—cows and horses—and he was not about to lose any of his hard-earned wealth.

In July 1886, suspecting that one of his helpers, a young cowboy named Morrison, had stolen one of the horses, Rochas rode to La Luz and swore out a warrant for his arrest. Morrison was brought in for questioning, but released. He headed immediately for Dog Canyon to exact revenge, hiding behind a boulder and waiting for Rochas to show himself. Rochas obliged, heading up the slope to work on one of his rock walls. Morrison fired two shots with a Winchester; one hit the Frenchman in the stomach, the other in the arm.

Rochas staggered back to his cabin, barred the door, and lay down on his bed with pistol in hand. He waited a long time. At around ten that night, Morrison burst through Rochas' door and got a bullet for his effort. Even though the Frenchman shot him from nearly point-blank range, the wounded Morrison managed to get away. Rochas eventually recovered fully from his wounds.

With the help of his sometimes untrustworthy hired hands, Rochas succeeded as a cattleman in that harsh country, eventually establishing a herd of five-hundred head that bore his particular brand, the Scoop R. These animals he guarded jealously, sometimes accusing neighboring cattlemen of stealing them during roundup time. Whenever cattle from surrounding ranches strayed up for a drink of Frenchy's precious water, he would sic his dogs on them, chasing the strays back where they belonged. More than once he confronted the strays' owners, spitting curses in French and warnings in broken English for cattlemen to keep their cows on their own property.

Author's Photo

Dorsey Bonnell's mural portrait of Oliver Lee at the Oliver Lee Memorial State Park.



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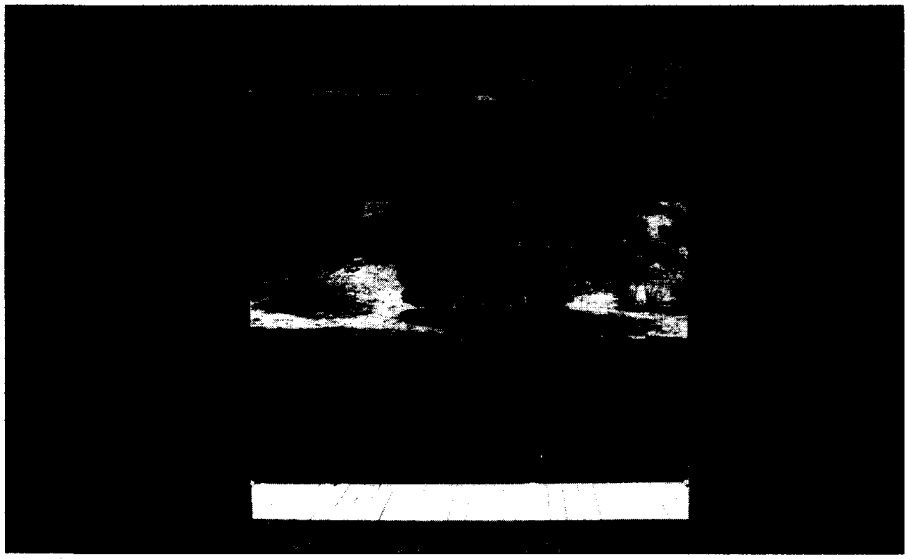
Nobody knows for certain why Rochas was so venomous with his neighbors, though archaeological excavations of the Frenchman's old cabin suggest a possible reason for the foreigner's ill temper. Countless bottles of patent medicine were found at the site, most notably, Davis's Vegetable Painkiller, a concoction that contained camphor, red and black pepper, ammonia, opium, and alcohol—about 190 proof. The sheer number of bottles suggests that the Frenchman kept himself well oiled. Whatever the reason for his foul temper, it made enemies of his neighbors. To make matters worse, he had the only good water in Dog Canyon, and during the drought years of the early nineties, he prospered while surrounding cattlemen suffered.

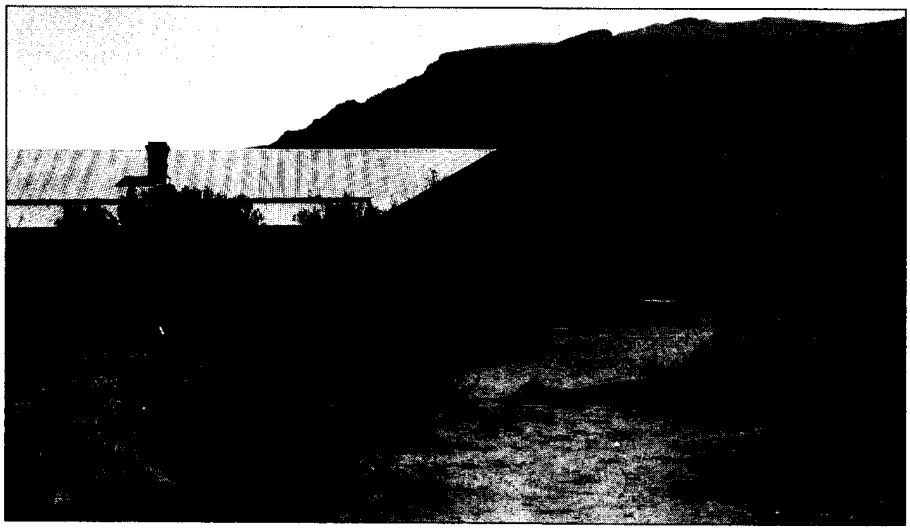


Author's Photo

Ranch house ruins at the Oliver Lee Memorial State Park.

One of the cattlemen who undoubtedly resented Rochas was Oliver Lee. Seeking new land for their herds of horses and cattle, Lee and his half-brother, Perry Altman, had come from Texas to New Mexico Territory in the mid-1880s. On their way into the territory, at Mescalero, Lee and Altman had bumped into William "Cherokee Bill" Kellam, who told them about Dog Canyon. Kellam said a large herd of cattle—perhaps up to a thousand head—could be penned in the canyon against the sheer western face of the Sacramentos with little difficulty. The idea appealed to the half-brothers—before long they returned to the Tularosa Basin with their animals and their family.

They arrived not long after the Lincoln County War. Now talk of the "Santa Fe Ring" and its power prevailed in the country. But Oliver Lee, an ambitious young man, expert horseman and marksman, was not intimidated by these tales. He planned to become a big man in the territory, and by way of announcing his intentions, he publicly demonstrated his shooting ability on the Fourth of July, 1885. At a neighboring ranch, where cowboys had gathered to show off their accuracy with firearms, Lee had a young boy take a pine plank a mile out on the range and plant it there. Lee hit the board five of six times with a high-powered rifle. Later, he demonstrated his mounted marksmanship. Using a cedar hitching post as a target, he rode his horse in a circle, firing six shots from his pistol. Each round found its mark. That was the day Oliver Lee introduced himself to the locals. Soon he was very well known.



Author's Photo

Oliver Lee's ranch house at the Oliver Lee Memorial State Park.

Over the following years, Lee was often accused of killing men. The best known of his alleged victims was Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain, an outspoken Republican politician and editor of the *Mesilla Independent.* Lee and his fellow Democrats hated Fountain. In 1896, Fountain and his nine-year-old son, Henry, both vanished mysteriously at the Chalk Hills near White Sands.

Fearing for their lives, Lee and his men fled into the desert. Supporters of Fountain hired the renowned lawman Pat Garrett to arrest the suspects and bring them to justice. The result was the infamous shootout at the Wildey Well between Garrett and his deputies and Lee and his men. In that fight, Lee mortally wounded Garrett's deputy sheriff, Kent Kearney. That charge was added to the Fountain murder charge, and in 1899, Lee was tried in Hillsboro. He was acquitted.

Oliver Lee eventually became one of the biggest cattlemen in New



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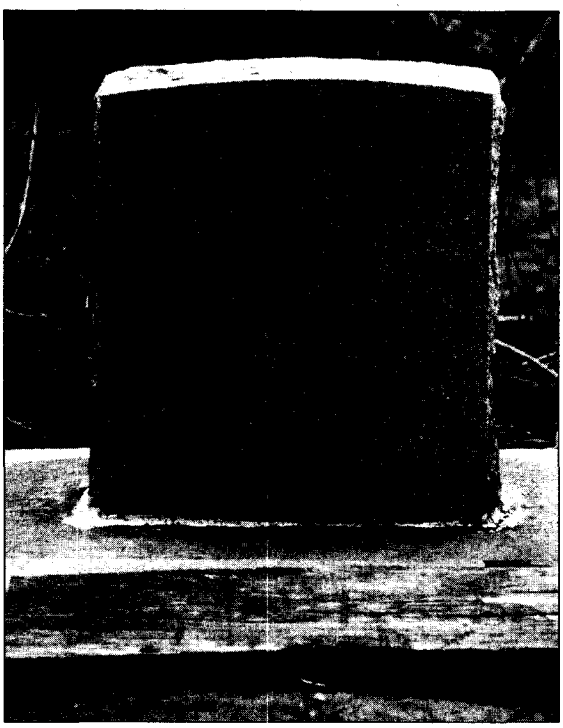
Mexico, teaming with others to form the Circle Cross Cattle Company, an enterprise that, at its peak, controlled almost one million acres of land from Cloudcroft, New Mexico, to El Paso, Texas.

After financial difficulties forced the company to dissolve in the 1920s, Lee went on to serve with distinction as a New Mexico state senator. Even then, though, the law of the Old West still guided his life. In *The Fabulous Frontier*, William Keleher says, "The old ways of the range clung to Oliver Lee and during the time of his service in the State Legislature it was an open secret among his brethren in the Senate that at every session he carried a forty-five in a leather holster, with a well filled cartridge belt nicely concealed beneath the folds of the Prince Albert coat which he wore on all occasions of state."

In June of 1892, perhaps fed up with the cowpuncher's life, Frank Rochas sold his herd of five hundred cattle to John Riley of the Tularosa Land and Cattle Company. Riley's partners were William Rynerson and Thomas Catron, the latter of Santa Fe Ring fame. A promissory note signed by John Riley for the Tularosa Land and Cattle Company reads, "One year after date for value received we promise to pay to the order of Frank Rochas Five Thousand seven hundred and sixteen dollars and forty cents, bearing eight per cent per annum interest from date till paid." Probate records show that by mid-June 1893, the company had paid Rochas $3,000, leaving a balance of $2,716.40. With interest, the Tularosa Land and Cattle Company owed Rochas a remaining total of $3,311.40. As it turned out, the Frenchman never saw another payment.

On December 23, 1894, Francois Jean Rochas sat down at the wood-plank table in his rock cabin at Dog Canyon to write some letters. He wrote to his brother and sisters back in France, and he wrote to a friend in Santa Fe, a Mr. Q. Monier. In the latter letter, Rochas asked his friend for a very specific favor: to contact the surveyor general in Santa Fe. Rochas wanted the land he had squatted on for the past ten years to be surveyed so he could legally claim it.

Nobody knows for certain why Rochas, who had lived without worry for a decade, suddenly grew concerned about claiming what was rightfully his. Surely he was not worried about Oliver Lee's grabbing the land. Lee, his nearest Dog Canyon neighbor, had all the acreage he needed, and he was already getting water out of the Dog Canyon stream. In 1893, Lee had built a mile-long ditch from the mouth of the canyon to his ranch house. Archaeological evidence suggests that Lee and the Frenchman might have cooperated in the effort, for a small branch of Lee's ditch curved down to water Rochas' orchard. But Lee was, undoubtedly, one of the Texans Rochas had insulted with accusations of cattle rustling. An insult, however, was not motive enough for murder, at least not for an ambitious man like Oliver Lee.



Author's Photo

Frenchy Rochas' grave at La Luz, New Mexico. The original marker is in the foreground.

On December 26, 1894, the day after Rochas had spent another lonely Christmas in his rock cabin, three riders appeared out of nowhere, yelling for the old man to come to the door. Rifle in hand, Rochas stepped outside, feisty and ill-tempered as always. The men had come for one reason only. Within moments one of them drew and fired three shots at the Frenchman. Two of the bullets missed, but one struck him mortally. While his assassins rode away from Dog Canyon, Rochas stumbled into his cabin, fell backwards onto his bed, and died.

The man who found Rochas several days later, Dan Fitchett, was one of Oliver Lee's cowboys. After the coroner's investigation, Rochas' body was taken to the small cemetery in La Luz and buried without ceremony. As news of the Frenchman's death spread around the territory, nobody was really surprised that he had finally gotten his due. People speculated idly on the subject, and for a while some believed that Oliver Lee was the murderer. But the only question of any real interest to locals involved Rochas' estate: who would get the money? As it turned out, his relatives in France got it—or part of it, anyhow. His siblings' New York attorneys managed to collect for their services almost $1,500 on an estate valued at over $4,000.

Several years after Rochas' death, two Pinkerton operatives were in the territory to investigate the Fountain murder. One of them, W.B. Sayers, became fascinated with the Frenchman's murder and began an investigation. His questions eventually led him to the state penitentiary in Santa Fe, where he interviewed inmate Eli "Slick" Miller, who claimed to know about Rochas' killers. According to Sayers, Miller said that "Lee, McNew and a man named Dan Davis went to the Frenchman's ranch on horseback; the Frenchman met them at the door with his gun and began cursing Lee and Lee shot him; he fired at him



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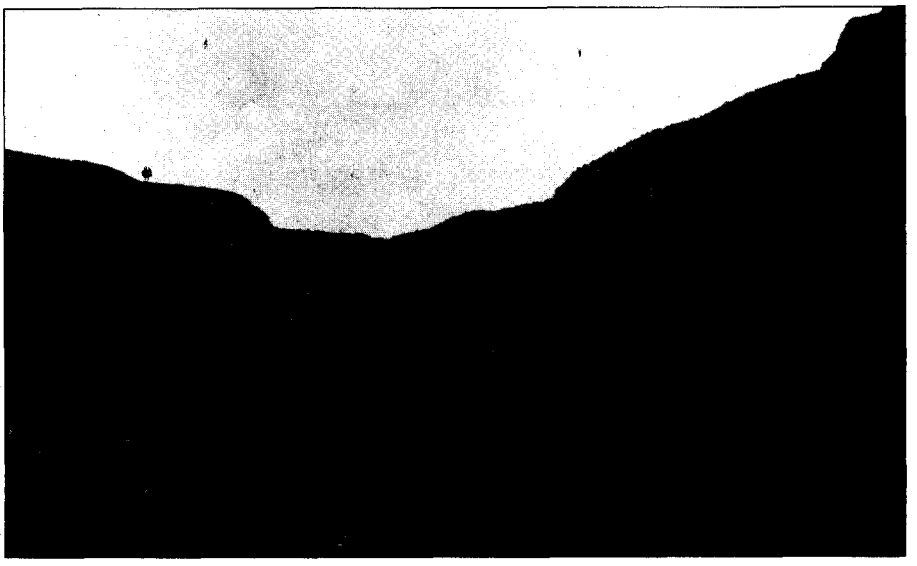
three times, only one bullet taking effect. There was nothing done about it, as the Frenchman had no relatives and no friends to take the matter up, so Oliver Lee jumped his ranch and the matter ended." Miller said he had learned of the killing from Dan Davis.

An inmate serving time in the state pen is not the most reliable of witnesses, but Oliver Lee had murdered men before. Less than a year prior to the Frenchman's death, Lee and Bill McNew had killed Matt Coffelt and Charley Rhodius for supposedly rustling a herd of Lee's cattle. According to Sayers, New Mexico Governor W.T. Thorton claimed he knew for certain that Lee also was involved in the killing of a cowboy named Walter Good.



Author's Photo

Rugged Dog Canyon, New Mexico.

TO THIS DAY, however, Oliver Lee's supporters deny he had anything to do with the Frenchman's death. His local defenders claim that to find Rochas' killers one need look no farther than the partners in the Tularosa Land and Cattle Company. Cold-blooded murder would not have been beneath the likes of Riley, Rynerson, and Catron. They even had a motive: the $3311.40 they owed the Frenchman. But the murder would have been foolish. For one thing, Rochas' sale of the herd to Riley, et al, was common knowledge. If signing the promissory note were a ruse, why would they pay Rochas $3,000 before killing him? As it turned out, because the promissory note was on record, the Tularosa Land and Cattle Company ended up paying the Rochas estate, including interest, $4087.12.

More likely, Rochas died at the hand of one of his neighbors. And the neighbor who had the most to gain from Rochas' death was Oliver Lee. Since the early 1880s talk had circulated of a railroad passing through the area en route from El Paso to White Oaks, New Mexico. Morris R. Locke had even laid several miles of track north from El Paso before the project broke him. In the early 1890s, people speculated that it was only a matter of time before the Tularosa Basin would be opened to civilization.

Perhaps Frank Rochas had heard the talk, too, and decided money could be made from the venture. If the railroad did come, it would pass within a few miles of his Dog Canyon property. His precious water would be a valuable commodity for trains traveling across that arid land. But he could not benefit from the railroad unless he legally owned the Dog Canyon property, and so he finally decided to file a claim. Perhaps the Frenchman mentioned his plans to Oliver Lee. The railroad, if it came, would pass even closer to Lee's ranch house, and Lee would have liked nothing better than to have complete control over the Dog Canyon water resource, just in case the railroad wanted it.

One short year after Rochas' death, New York entrepreneur Charles B. Eddy was in the territory promoting his El Paso and Northeastern Railroad. In April 1897, Eddy accompanied a group of eastern capitalists on a camping trip from White Oaks south to El Paso, along the proposed railroad line. Leading the Easterners on their first venture into the wild Tularosa country: Oliver Lee. In October 1897, Eddy got the backing he wanted, and workers began to dig test wells for the locomotives. The wells produced heavily mineralized water that corroded machinery, and railroad men feared the entire project would fail if they could not find enough clear mountain water.

As always, money solved the problem. Within a year the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad paid over $75,000 for neighboring ranches and their water rights. In April 1898, Oliver Lee sold his Alamo Canyon ranch to Charles B. Eddy for $5000. As it turned out, the railroad did not need Rochas' Dog Canyon water. But in 1905, Lee filed claim appropriating all of the Dog Canyon water, which he used in his cattle operations, and to irrigate a large orchard. As was often the case in the Old West, the man of ambition won out over the solitary pioneer.

In 1939, a few years before Lee died an old man in Alamogordo, the federal government acquired the water from Dog Canyon for use at White Sands National Monument. In 1980, the state of New Mexico dedicated Oliver Lee Memorial State Park, ten miles south of Alamogordo. The park is situated on the Dog Canyon property where Oliver Lee and Francois Jean Rochas played out their lives. Perhaps nobody will ever know for certain who killed Frenchy Rochas, but it seems ironic that the pioneer Frenchman's land should be preserved forever in a park named for the man who may have murdered him.



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# COWBOY

*Arbuckles: The Coffee That Won the West*, by Francis L. Fugate. (Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas 79968-0633. $50.00 cloth bound.)

Around nineteenth-century bunkhouses and chuck wagons the word "coffee" was interchangeable with "Arbuckles." John Arbuckle, whose last name would assume common usage throughout the Old West, was born in 1839 in Pennsylvania. He attended school in Pittsburgh with future steel magnates Andrew Carnegie and Henry Phipps. Arbuckle, too, was destined to become a wealthy captain of industry, and coffee would be the cornerstone of his empire. Arbuckle's father was a prosperous cotton mill owner, and as a young man John joined his older brother in forming a wholesale grocery business, Arbuckles & Co. Although coffee was in great demand, preserving its freshness was difficult. The innovative John Arbuckle developed a series of inventions and processes which revolutionized the coffee industry and made him a multimillionaire. As the brand name "Arbuckles" became synonymous with coffee throughout the West, John centered his expanding business interests in New York City, where the Arbuckles plant occupied a dozen blocks along the Brooklyn waterfront. He also was a generous philanthropist, engaging resourcefully in a variety of philanthropic and business activities until his death in 1912.

The late Francis L. Fugate, author, professor, and president of the Western Writers of America, became interested in Arbuckles as a boy, and his unending fascination resulted in his final writing project.

*Arbuckles* is a large, handsome book, almost one-fourth of which boasts color illustrations of vintage Arbuckles labels and ads, along with excellent black and white photos. Fugate traces the origins of the consumption of coffee beans to ancient Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) and the emergence of coffee as a social beverage in Arabia. So much coffee was shipped from the port of Mocha at the mouth of the Red Sea that "mocha" became a trade name for Arabian coffee.


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# COFFEE

Fugate explores the development of European coffee houses; then brings coffee to the American colonies and on to the western frontier. The Lewis and Clark expedition packed along a fifty-pound sack of coffee. Mountain men and soldiers included coffee in their provisions, and western Indians became "extravagantly fond" of the "black medicine."

Despite its presence on the early frontier, coffee drinking did not take off until John Arbuckle began making his contributions to the industry, which occurred just as the range cattle industry began to expand in the West. Cowboys and ranchers, along with other men and women of the West, became addicted to Arbuckles. On the ranch or cattle trail coffee had to be strong, "plumb barefooted" (uncontaminated by sugar or cream). Weak coffee "tasted like water scalded to death," while cowboy Bill Jones observed, "A lot of people never realize how little water it takes to make good coffee." The ranching frontier also attracted John Arbuckle himself, where he bought a horse ranch, north of Cheyenne in 1888. He later invested in a large New Mexico cattle enterprise.

Filled with intriguing historical information, colorful anecdotes, and superb illustrations, *Arbuckles* is a triumphant finale to the career of an outstanding Western writer.—*Bill O'Neal, Carthage, Texas.*

### Border War Primer

*Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861–1865*, by Thomas Goodrich. (Indiana University Press, 601 North Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3797. $24.95 cloth bound.)

Long before the Civil War began in South Carolina in 1861, violence had raged on the Kansas-Missouri border. In 1854, Congress threw Kansas open to settlement, stipulating that settlers decide the question of slavery. "Slavery *could* exist on the virgin soil of Kansas, most Southerners believed, and to maintain the delicate balance of power [between slave and free states] in Congress, slavery in Kansas *had* to exist," writes *Black Flag* author Thomas Goodrich. Thus slaveholding Missourians agitated in Kansas for slavery just as abolitionists, many pouring in from New England, fought against it.

The conflict quickly became violent. On May 21, 1856, pro-slavers sacked the free-state capital of Lawrence, Kansas; on May 24, abolitionist John Brown and some cronies countered by murdering five pro-slavery men on Pottawatomie Creek. By the time Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861, hatred between Kansans and Missourians was deep-seated. Both sides reasoned that the outbreak of full-scale war sanctioned retaliations. Thus the border between the states became a "dark and bloody ground" contested and ravaged by legitimate armies and partisan guerrillas alike.

Goodrich's *Black Flag* is a good primer to that border war, introducing readers to its many aspects and characters. Here are Kansas senator/general Jim Lane, who took time from his duties in Washington to lead his "Kansas Brigade" on Jayhawking raids into Missouri; Charles Jennison, whose Jayhawkers, under the guise of the Seventh Kansas Cavalry, pillaged Missouri; killer William Clarke Quantrill, whose Missouri partisans became, perhaps, the most feared guerrilla band in history; and Quantrill lieutenant "Bloody" Bill Anderson, who ordered the massacre of Union troops at Centralia, Missouri, in 1864.

Goodrich also chronicles Quantrill's raid on Lawrence in August 1863, and the Union's infamous "Order No. 11."—General Thomas Ewing's attempt to rid four Missouri counties of guerrillas and their supporters by removing all inhabitants from their land and homes. Union troops accomplished the task with little regard for life or property. As Goodrich writes, "General Orders, No. 11 was perhaps the harshest act of the U.S. government against its own people in American history."

Goodrich demonstrated his able writing style in 1991 with *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre,* but here he relegates himself to writing introductory paragraphs and transitional sentences. He prefers to let quotes of people involved in the border war carry the story. While primary sources are, of course, the basis of any historical narrative, they are often plodding and archaically phrased. Goodrich's repeated use of long quotes slows his story and creates unnecessary distractions. More of Goodrich's own well-crafted prose would be welcome. Goodrich dedicates *Black Flag* to prominent border historian Albert Castel, and indeed, Castel lauds this book on a cover blurb. While *Black Flag* is a good introduction to the Kansas-Missouri conflict, Castel's own *A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861–1865* remains one of the best books on the border war.—*Steve Jones, Stillwater, Oklahoma.*

### Where the Deer and the Antelope Roam

*Wild Animals and Settlers on the Great Plains.* By Eugene D. Fleharty. (University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-0445. $27.95, cloth bound.)



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First, ignore the author's warning that "this is *not* another buffalo book." What he meant to say is that it is not *just* another buffalo book. There is a lot of wonderful bison lore between these covers, from market hunting to the most spectacular example of sport or recreation involving the shaggy beasts, the hunt of Grand Duke Alexis of Russia. He was escorted by Buffalo Bill, General Phillip Sheridan, and Colonel George A. Custer (the latter, typically, rode his horse to death in the hunt).

But, 'tis true, more of the book is about the other animals native to the Great Plains during their early settlement and, to some extent, how they have fared in modern times. Writers and historians have largely ignored this area of western history until recently.

Fleharty, a zoologist by training, is also a good historian. He has dug deeply into the files of old newspapers and farm journals to find excellent contemporary descriptions of the flora and fauna of the region. Fleharty focuses on the western two-thirds of Kansas between 1850 and 1879—from the western edge of the tallgrass prairies through the Great Bend and Smoky Hills to the High Plains and on out to the Colorado line.

The author breaks his study of the interaction between humans and wild animals into sub-topics, such as hunting. He takes up wild game as a source of subsistence (food), profit (market hunting), and recreation. One chapter covers the origins of the conservation movement in the West, which began with concern for the fate of various species, especially the buffalo. Most early farmers and ranchers were as oblivious to their destruction of native fauna as they were to their depletion of the soil, but a few were tree planters, fish hatchers, and bird watchers. Other sodbusters and cattlemen kept zoos of native species, made pets of everything from prairie dogs to wolves and cinnamon bears, or attempted to domesticate buffalo and antelope.

Natural dangers and hazards (except for blizzards and hostile Indians) were few, except for rattlesnakes and rabid skunks. Occasionally a wounded buffalo or elk could maim or kill a hapless settler. Many critters were nuisances, however, mainly predatory coyotes and the grasshoppers and jackrabbits that stripped fields of their crops. Humans also introduced new pests, such as rats, that arrived in freight cars of the westering Kansas Pacific Railroad.

Fleharty best describes the hunts that took place out on the Kansas Plains. Hard as it is to imagine, rabbit hunts could rival the quest for buffalo in terms of excitement. Kansans scorned "circle hunting" (akin to California's massive jackrabbit "drives") and instead hunted individual animals with greyhounds. The swift hunting dogs could outrun but not out-turn the hares, which could stop on a dime and twist away from their canine pursuers. The galloping hunters sped after their quarry heedless of the dangerous and ubiquitous prairie dog holes. By comparison, English fox hunts were sedentary picnics.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

**Art as History**

*Prints of the West,* by Ron Tylor. (Fulcrum Press, 5100 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 230, Washington, DC 20016. $39.95 cloth bound.)

*Prints of the West* is a lavishly illustrated, handsomely designed coffee-table book which transcends the limitations frequent to that genre where volumes are often large in size but small in insight. Its beauty as an art book does not prevent it from entering the contemporary, controversial debate about the fundamental meaning of western American art.

Ron Tylor uses the print collection of the Library of Congress to address three themes in American history and art. First, Tylor notes the growth of the lithographic printing process in Europe and in the United States in the nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1830s, this process introduced a revolution in the printing of artistic images. Lithography made magnificent images widely available to thousands of viewers who now had constant access to hundreds and eventually thousands of pictures.

Tylor demonstrates how the lithographic revolution affected American attitudes about the great trans-Mississippi West. Technical strides in printing paralleled expanded exploration of the frontier, and artists and lithographers depictions' of the region greatly influenced Easterners' expectations of the West. Utilizing the Library of Congress's print collection and the history of lithography to guide his discussion, Tylor traces the emerging perceptions of the American West.

*Prints of the West* effectively becomes an illustrated history of the American West between 1830 and 1900. The changing imagery in the prints mirrors the changes in the West itself, proceeding from the flora and fauna, landscapes, and preCivil War Indian cultures to the "birds-eye" views of cities and fire insurance maps of later years.

Readers of *True West* will find *Prints of the West* an enjoyable book. They should ponder Tylor's measured evaluation of the role of western American art in American history. Recently, some exhibitions and commentators have accused nineteenth-century western artists of a variety of sins, including not having informed their nineteenth-century art with late-twentieth-century attitudes.

Tylor firmly reminds readers of the historic context within which these artists worked. He writes "that is not to say that artists and photographers were obligated to provide a balanced or objective picture of what existed; it is rather an admonition for those that might think they did....for good or ill, it is now clear that their images played a large and positive role in the development of the West and in America's concept of the West and of itself." Amen!—*Joseph C. Porter, Arlington, Texas.*



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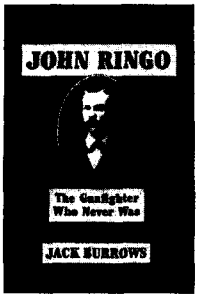


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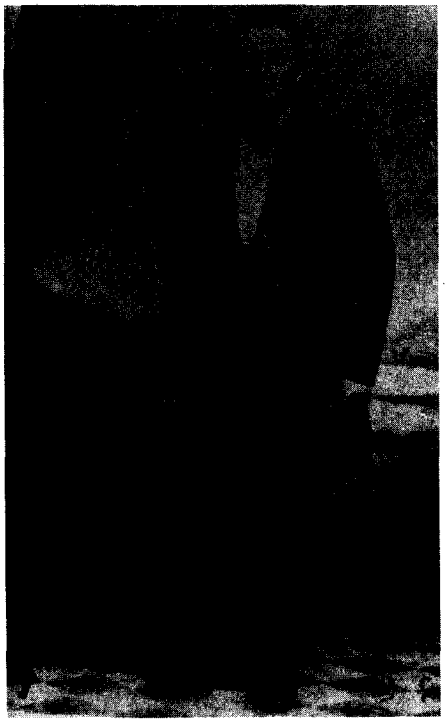
# SNOW BIZ

By CHUCK PARSONS

Who was "Snowshoe Thompson?" asks Tim Dye of Stafford Kansas. Thompson is another of the many characters who enjoyed considerable fame during their lifetimes but have been largely forgotten by more recent readers.

Ski expert John Albert Thompson was born in Norway April 30, 1827, brought to Illinois in 1837, and lived in the Midwest until crossing the plains to California in 1851. At first he ranched in the Placerville, California, area, but then he heard of the difficulties existing in transporting the mail across the mountains during the winter. He contracted to carry the mail from Placerville to Carson City, Nevada, a ninety-mile trek, and return, which he was able to do without difficulty, thanks to his hand made "snowshoes." We would call his snowshoes skis today; they were ten feet long and four and one-half inches wide.



Nevada State Historical Society

John Albert "Snowshoe" Thompson, about 1868.

All winter Thompson carried the mail, usually from sixty to eighty pounds of it, and sometimes up to one hundred pounds. He apparently never experienced any problems even though he carried neither a weapon nor extra clothing nor food which required cooking. At times he made errands of mercy, and more than one hapless settler owed his life to Thompson's rescuing him from freezing to death. He carried mail through rain, sleet, and snow for at least twenty years in the Sierra.

Nearing the end of his service, Thompson petitioned the government for $6,000 compensation but received nothing. He became known throughout the West during his lifetime, and astounded onlookers with his ski-jumping performances.

Thompson was employed as a mine superintendent when he died, May 15, 1876, at Genoa, Nevada.

## Presidential Relations and Cartoon Creations

Ben Lincoln, of Wiscasset, Maine, wants to know how many sisters President Lincoln had and, secondly, what ever became of the Red Ryder?

Sarah Lincoln was the firstborn child of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Abraham, their second child, became our sixteenth president. These are the only two children who survived to adulthood. Sarah Lincoln married but died before having any children.

Lincoln's mother died in 1818, and in 1819 his father married Mrs. Sally Johnston, a widow with three children, Lincoln's step-siblings.

As for Red Ryder, he was a comic book creation of Colorado-born Fred Harman, published between 1940 and 1957. Harman was an accomplished artist whose career bloomed with the creation of Little Beaver and his cowboy companion, Red Ryder. Harman originally set their adventures in the early twentieth century, occasionally resorting to airplanes and automobiles to solve America's problems. When Harman changed the setting to the nineteenth century, the comic became nationally popular and assured its creator's fame. The Red Ryder eventually inspired B-movies, novels, toys, a radio show, and serials for Saturday matinees.

One hundred fifty-two editions of the Red Ryder comic book were printed. Other collectors or dealers in paper ephemera can determine the value of a collection.

## Brave Lawman

Harking back to a topic we addressed in May's issue of *True West*, Albuquerque reader, C.T. Miller reminds me that Dee Harkey's *Mean as Hell* includes a lot of information on southwest killer James Brown Miller. The modern Mr. Miller writes, "Harkey knew Miller as a young man in Texas...was a lawman most of his life, and his book is fascinating. He had a lot of guts." I agree, and I appreciate the reminder.

## Singing Arizonans

Can any of our readers help us answer a question about the



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Arizona Rangers? James D. Mealer, of Nuevo, California, wants to know about a group of singing cowboys who called themselves the "Arizona Rangers" or "Wranglers." They performed during the 1920s—before Roy Rogers and the "Sons of the Pioneers" came along. Hopefully a reader can help out with this question.

## Sparking His Interest

Philip T. Sparks, who hails from Alberta, Canada, inquires about a possible relative who may have been involved in a train robbing gang in the United States. Mr. Sparks once read that Frank Sparks was credited with the first robbery of a moving train in Missouri. I cannot say if the outlaw Sparks was a member of the Canadian Sparks' family, but the notorious Reno gang of Indiana (not Missouri) had a member named Sparks.

On October 6, 1866, John Reno and his gang committed the first train robbery in America, and perhaps the world, by holding up the wood-burning Ohio and Mississippi Railroad train near Seymour, Indiana. The gang robbed the Adams Express car of $10,000 and made good their escape. The vigilantes warned a man they knew as William Sparks to leave the country; he may have participated in the robbery.

Pinkerton agent Richard Winscott managed to take a photograph of two members of the gang, John Reno and Frank Sparks. When Reno later dictated his autobiography for publication he claimed that neither William nor Frank Sparks had anything to do with the train robbery.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions. Due to the volume of mail, we cannot forward correspondence to people whose questions appear in "Answer Man."


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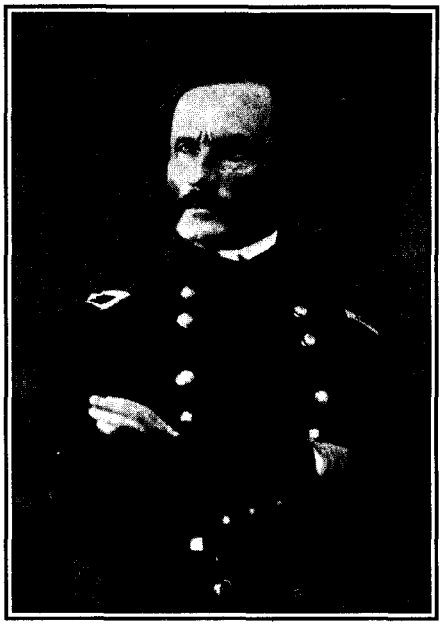

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General James H. Carleton's March from California to New Mexico was a remarkable military achievement.

Though he hailed from Maine, James H. Carleton played an important part in California history. Born in 1814, Carleton joined the Maine Militia in 1838 and was commissioned a second lieutenant of dragoons in the regular army in 1839. His early military career took him to the Rocky Mountains with Stephen Watts Kearny and to Mexico with General John E. Wool.

Late in 1861 Carleton, by then a colonel, organized the California Regulars, later known as the First Regiment of Infantry of California. On January 31, 1862, Brigadier

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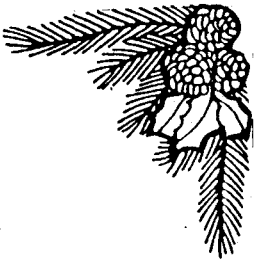

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General George Wright sent orders from San Francisco stating, in part, that Carleton's mission included "the recapture of all our forts in Arizona and New Mexico, driving the rebel forces out of that country or capturing them, and opening the southern mail route."

General Wright must have foreseen the future. In February of that year a Rebel army invaded New Mexico, capturing Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The Northern army carried away what supplies it could and burned the rest.

*"I worked hard with my California Boys and got them safely through the Desert. When time wears away, and people begin to think again—the passage of 2000 men over the great desert in the heat of summer will be thought to be not a contemptible achievement. I could not have done it with any other troops.*

Following orders, Colonel Carleton took his small army across the southern deserts, reaching Tucson, Arizona, in June, and marching on into New Mexico. He was made brigadier general, commanding, in Santa Fe.

What was that march across the desert like?

We can read the answer from Carleton's own pen. In November of that year Carleton wrote a letter to United States Senator Milton S. Latham requesting compensation for some of his property which was destroyed when the Union Army retreated. In that same letter Carleton describes his march across the deserts from California to New Mexico.

"I worked hard with my California Boys and got them safely through the Desert. When time wears away, and people begin to think again—the passage of 2000 men over the great desert in the heat of summer will be thought to be not a con-

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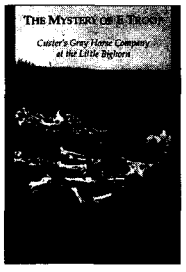


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temptible achievement, I could not have done it with any other troops. The men were devoted to me, and never murmured in all their hardships and sufferings.

"When all their toils and all their privations are thought of by myself; and when I look back and saw that a single mistake would have been horrible disaster—I shudder at my responsibility even with that small force. It is a matter that will never properly be appreciated. But if one can fancy a desert with its hot sands, its brassy sky, its utter desolation, and its want of everything which would go to sustain life, and then imagine a caravan of 2000 men and 1800 animals passing over it, one could fancy what would be his feelings of responsibility as he saw them on their weary journey and saw them gathering around the scanty supplies of water with famished looks and absolutely holding him responsible all the time that the supply should meet their want.

*"But if one can fancy a desert with its hot sands, its brassy sky, its utter desolation, and its want of everything which would go to sustain life, and then imagine a caravan of 2000 men and 1800 animals passing over it, one could fancy what would be his feelings of responsibility as he saw them on their weary journey..."*

"What if *one* of his calculations failed! You can imagine the result.

"I felt a great burthen fall from my shoulders when I saw the Rio Grande."

Whenever Carleton wrote a letter, a subordinate made a copy in the correspondence log. Part of that log has survived in private hands, and thus we know how he felt about his great trek.

Hurrah for the men of the California Regulars!



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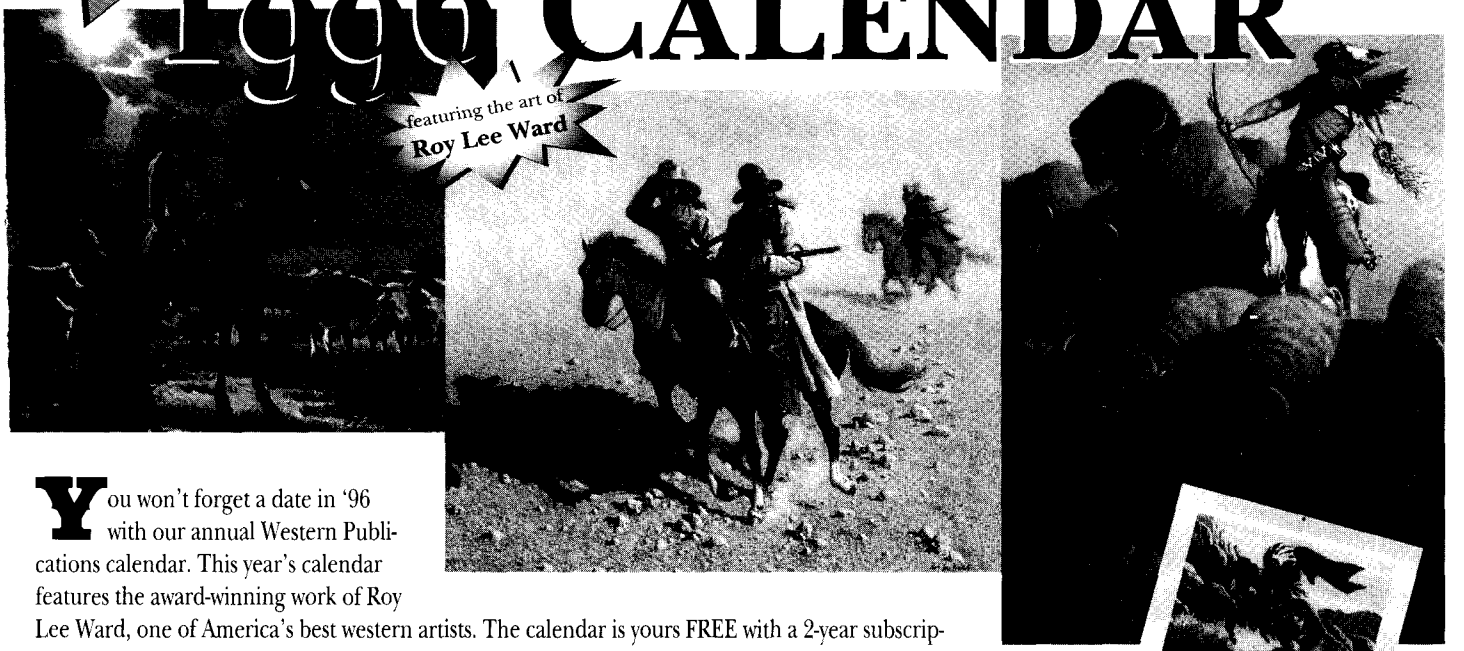


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